DESTINY.

DESTINY;

OR,

THE CHIEF'S DAUGHTER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"MARRIAGE," AND "THE INHERITANCE."

"What's in a name?"—SHAKSPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR ROBERT CADELL, EDINBURGH;

AND WHITTAKER AND CO., LONDON.

1831.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND CO., PAUL'S WORK, CANONGATE.



DESTINY.

CHAPTER I.

Thus Ronald came, saw, and was gone—unseen, unknown. Who can tell what a day may bring forth—what a moment may annihilate! Ere the sun complete its diurnal course, what clouds of events pass and repass o'er the surface of Time's dial! Surely man differs little from the atoms which sport in the sunbeam, and well may his life be compared to the vapour that passeth away—to the shadow which mocketh the eye—to the dream that scareth by night. He is born, and grows up like the grass, and like the grass he withers before it is noon, or falls before the scythe in all its pride and fresh-

ness. How vain are all our schemes for futurity! Human wisdom exhausts itself in devising what a higher power shows to be vanity.—We decide for to-day, and a passing moment scatters our decisions as chaff before the wind—We resolve for to-morrow, to-morrow comes but to root up our resolutions—We scheme for our works to remain monuments of our power and wisdom, and the most minute, the most trivial event is sufficient to overturn all our purposes, and cast down to the dust the thoughts and the labours of a life. Truly, "it is not in man that walketh, to direct his steps."

Though none may have been so foolish or so daring as to hope they might escape the final doom of mortality, yet there are many to whom the King of Terrors appears as an obscure indistinct vision, seen at the termination of a long vista of years, whose dart is indeed uplifted, but out of the power of which, their youth, their health, their strength, and other adventitious aids, have far removed them.

Such and so remotely was the pale monarch viewed by Glenroy, when Norman, the pride of

his heart, the prop of his house, the desire of his eyes, was suddenly seized with a violent and dangerous malady. Expresses were sent in all directions, and doctors came full speed from all quarters—but in vain; the fever continued to increase, and poor Glenroy was at his wits' end. Yet, that his son, the heir of his house, the chief of a mighty clan, should actually die, was an apprehension too horrible to be admitted; it was a mere vague, nameless fear, that took possession of him, and made him walk about the house, and talk to every body as loud as he could, and bustle unceasingly, as though he were striving by his restless activity to get the better of some unseen evil. But, alas! Death was the evil, and vain the attempt to repulse *him* from whom all hearts recoil! After three weeks of racking suspense, the son of many hopes, the heir of many honours, was a lifeless lump of clay! "The eye that hath seen him shall see him no more."

It was some time ere Glenroy could fully comprehend the fact, that Norman—the gay, the blooming, the healthful, the active, the brave, should have been cut off in such a manner—the

thing was inconceivable, impossible! Had he fallen in battle, or been killed in a duel, he could have better understood it. But death thus to have invaded his mansion, even as he visits the cottar's hut, the peasant's clay-built shed—to have been thus bereft by the hand of disease, under his own roof, beneath his own bright skies, amid his own mountain solitudes, where sickness seldom came—with all that wealth and skill could do to save—poor Glenroy was confounded!

In vain his benighted soul strove to picture to itself another state of existence for the perished idol of his affections; his eye had never sought to pierce the dim opaque of mortal life, for that had hitherto been the boundary of his hopes, his wishes, his joys—and now all was gone—but where? He gazed upon Nature as though he sought his son amidst its bright manifestations; but he was not on the hills raising the wild bird, for the heather stood untrodden in its lonely brightness, and his dogs roamed around as if seeking their master;—he was not on the plain chasing the deer, for they

lay in their silent wildness beneath the shade of the green boughs;—he was not on the waters guiding his boat, for it was rocking idly on the blue waves, that curled gaily to the summer breeze; and the sun poured forth his meridian splendour, and all creatures seemed exulting in the joyfulness of existence. Could all these things be, if he, who in his father's eyes had given life to all, was dead? he, the heir of all this goodly scene, laid in his cold grave—his eyes closed for ever—his, the narrow house, and the deep sleep of death? "There is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that it shall sprout again, and the tender branch thereof shall not cease—through the scent of water, it will bud and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth and wasteth away! yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he?"

Glenroy's mind reeled beneath the stroke—all was dark within—his head became confused—his memory imperfect—his was the grief of warm affections and proud hopes, blasted and overthrown. His gourd had withered, and he knew not where to look for shelter for his grey

head; his cistern was broken, and he sought not the fountain from whence he might draw living waters to revive his soul. He was laden with grief, and "the darkness of age came like the mist of the desert." In vain did Edith struggle against her own sorrow, in attempts to mitigate the grief of her wretched father. In vain his two faithful adherents sought, in their own way, to turn his mind from the gloomy object on which it dwelt in a sort of panic-struck stupor—"One is not, and all seem to have departed."

CHAPTER II.

And where was Reginald, that he was not with the mourners to mingle his tears with theirs, and by his presence to cheer and support them in the hour of sorrow? Alas, Edith could not answer; for although he had been written to, on the first alarm of Norman's illness, no answer had been received, and many weeks had passed since she had heard from him. Thus the fever of anxiety was now added to the endurance of anguish, and the tears that fell for her brother were rendered doubly bitter by the neglect of her lover. Yet still, not even to herself would she acknowledge that she distrusted him; it was *impossible* that Reginald could be false, and that single word was the sheet-anchor of her soul: to that she clung with fearful tenacity, and worlds could not have wrested it from

her. True, it was equally impossible to account for Reginald's conduct; but *that*, she felt assured, would one day be fully explained. She would not, she said, she *could* not, an instant doubt it; but unconsciously, the poison of distrust was creeping slowly and silently into her heart, and corroding her very life-spring. To add to her suffering, Glenroy, having surmounted the first shock of his son's death, now became impatient for Reginald's return; and, as if eager to turn his thoughts to another channel, he talked unceasingly of him, and all that was to be done *for* and by him; for Reginald was now the heir, not only of his honours, but of his whole estates, as all were entailed. The natural impatience of his temper was also aggravated by his personal infirmities; gout, and indolence, and high living, and mental affliction combined, had all done the work, and more than the work of time; for time alone would not have made him the old and broken down man he now was. To add to his disquiet, he had no proper object for his irritation to work upon at that particular time, for Benbowie was at all times too passive to serve his purpose, and

Mrs Macauley had gone for a few days to pay a marriage visit to a niece of Mr Macauley's, who had lately married, and settled in the neighbourhood. At least a dozen times a-day he would ask Edith if there was no news of Reginald yet, and then he would ring the bell, and order the servants to go to the ferry, or to the clachan, and see if there were any signs of him; and he would call the housekeeper to know if Sir Reginald's rooms were ready yet, for that he expected him home that day; then, as he dozed and nodded in his arm-chair, he would suddenly start up with, "Was not Reginald to have been home before now, and what's keeping him then? And where's Molly Macauley, that she's not in the way?" (From the first hour of her departure, that had been the constant demand.) Or, worst of all, he would turn to Edith with a dreamy bewildered look, and say, "Aye, aye, it's well you're to be married to Reginald—Very well, it will be all his own. But where is he? When are you to make out the marriage? You'll surely be married soon now, my dear, will you not?"

At length—O agitation unspeakable—Edith

received a letter in the well-known handwriting of her lover. It bore a foreign post-mark, and the black seal denoted that the intelligence of Norman's death had reached him. Edith's hand trembled, and the tear-drops swelled in her eyes. "He knows all," she thought, "and yet he comes not to us! He can calmly write. Perhaps it is to tell us that he is not coming. Ah, how cold seems written condolence at such a time!" and she remained for some moments passive, under the mute agony of apprehension.

At length she opened the letter, and her doubts were dispelled. It was brief and agitated, and evidently written under the greatest anguish of spirit. He had only just learnt the sad tidings of Norman's death, and the expressions of his grief were frantic and full of self-upbraiding, that he had not set off on the first accounts of his cousin's illness. He said he never could forgive himself for having been absent at such a time; but he was just setting off for Britain, and would be at Glenroy almost as soon as his letter. A sentence had been begun, "And if you still love me as I—" But his pen had been drawn through

it, and he abruptly added, " Would to Heaven I had never left you !" Altogether, it was evidently written under all the incoherence of the most passionate and unsubdued emotion.

Such as it was, it was welcome, O how welcome, to Edith; and its tone of excitation seemed to her the surest pledge that the warmth of his affection continued unabated. " And if I still love him," she repeated, as she deciphered the half-obliterated letters—" Ah, how could he then doubt me? And what can he mean by what follows, would that he had never left me?"

In vain Edith read over and over again this strange expression. She could make no more of it at the last than at the first; so she concluded that Reginald himself knew not what he was writing in the anguish of his heart, for the loss of one who had been to him as his very brother, heightened too, it seemed, by the bitterest self-reproach at his own absence.

The intelligence of Sir Reginald's expected arrival gave a fresh stimulus to Glenroy's impatience, and he strove, poor man, in the bustle which he himself created, to drown the still

small voice of secret woe, which yet spoke daggers to his soul.

So passed several succeeding days in the feverish excitement of hope deferred. It was the evening of the fourth day of watching and disappointment, when Edith, having left Glenroy and Benbowie dozing over their bottle in the dining-room, sat alone in the drawing-room, with her eyes fixed on the waters which she expected to bear the truant to her heart. Assuredly he would cross at the ferry. It would shorten the time and distance so much, instead of travelling the tedious and hilly road with tired horses, at the end of a long and dreary stage. It was the way he used to take even in boisterous weather, when absent only for a day, and many a time she had softly chid the impatience which urged him to trust the slender boat and stormy sea. Now the evening was fair and sweet, and her father's pinnace had been stationed at the ferry to receive him; but Edith sighed as she saw its white sails, gilded by the setting sun, still flapping idly in the evening breeze. All at once she heard the sound of a carriage advancing. Her heart beat

as it drew nearer and nearer; and as it swept round the entrance, her eye caught a glimpse of an open travelling carriage, containing one gentleman, something—yet so unlike to Reginald! A single glance had sufficed to show that he was pale, that he leant back in the carriage with an air of languor, and eyes half closed. Could this be the gay, blooming, impetuous Reginald? But in a few seconds all doubts were removed, as the door was thrown open, and Sir Reginald Malcolm was announced. What a tide of mingled emotions rushed o'er Edith's heart as she rose to receive him to whom she had plighted her faith and love, but who now came thus late to claim them;—him from whom, on that very spot where she now stood, she had parted!—and oh, how differently did they now meet!

And one was gone, the playfellow of their childhood, the companion of their youth, the brother—the friend! Pale and motionless, Edith stood in silent emotion—in the tumult of her own feelings unconscious of the still more apparent agitation of Reginald, as he advanced, then took her hand, and pressed it to his lips. It was

the hand on which he himself had placed the ring of betrothment. He started, and suddenly dropping it, walked with hurried steps to the end of the room; then as quickly returning, he clasped Edith in his arms, and tenderly kissed her cheek, but while he did so tears burst from his eyes. The hearts of both were too full for utterance—a spell seemed upon their lips, and they remained in deep and silent emotion. Yet an unconcerned spectator would have remarked, that Sir Reginald's embarrassment was equal to his emotion, and that something more than sorrow struggled in his bosom and choaked his utterance. But Edith was too much under the influence of powerful feeling herself to be a nice observer of what was passing in the mind of another. Her tears continued to flow, from the mingled tide of grief and joy which swelled her heart.

A long pause ensued. At length Sir Reginald, as if by a violent effort, spoke.

"I have been delayed by illness," said he. The tone and accent, though beautifully modulated, were languid and mournful, and they sound-

ed so strange, that Edith could scarcely have recognised in them the gay familiar tones which still dwelt in fond memory's ear. Still it was Reginald that spoke, and these few simple words at once dispelled all the vague doubts which had arisen from his unaccountable delay.

"You have been ill!" she exclaimed; "and I did not know it—and you have hastened to us even before you are recovered!"

"But it is too late," said he bitterly.

"No—no—dear Reginald, do not say so—we still need your sympathy." Her voice faultered, and again her tears fell. A sigh, almost a groan, broke from Sir Reginald's heart. He rose and traversed the apartment, then resumed his seat, and leaning his head on a table, tears forced their way through the fingers which shaded his brow. But again he roused himself, and strove to speak calmly and firmly, while he enquired—"How is Glenroy?"

"You will find him changed, much changed," replied Edith, striving to subdue her emotion also; "but the sight of you will, I am sure, do him good. Ah, Reginald, you are now his only

hope."—She stopped, for her firmness was forsaking her.

"And you, Edith—and you," gasped he, as he again buried his face in his hands, and his whole frame shook with emotion—"what am I to you?"

Edith was silent. Reginald heavily raised his head, but his enquiring gaze met only the deep blush and the downcast eye of love revealed, though not avowed. Then, in a tone of forced composure, he said—

"Edith, should you have known me again? Am not I changed?" he added, attempting to smile, while he grew very pale.

"We are all changed," said she, sadly, "for we have all known affliction since we parted—but you have been ill in health, and you concealed it from me! while I—ah, Reginald, had you but guessed what"——

"I *have* been ill," interrupted he, hurriedly; "but that is past,—at least the worst. But you say Glenroy is much altered? Had I not better go to him? The sooner the meeting is over the better."

"Perhaps so," said Edith, "if you feel able for it. But you are fatigued—had you not better rest and"——

"No—nothing—I wish it over," said he, impatiently. "I will do any thing—every thing for you both," he added, with emotion.

"I am sure you will," said Edith, with simple earnestness, "and if you wish to comfort us, you will yourself be comforted. Now go, dear Reginald!" She extended her hand—he took it, pressed it in his with a sigh, then slowly quitted the apartment.

CHAPTER III.

EDITH remained motionless and bewildered—her heart sank, she knew not why—her tears flowed, she could not tell for what. Reginald was returned, ought she not to be happy? But was it her own—her long-loved, her loving Reginald she had beheld? Oh, surely he was changed. Others might think him improved, but no change could improve that image so deeply impressed upon her heart. Edith loved too profoundly to *admire*.

A long time elapsed ere she heard her father's slow and shuffling step crossing the hall to the drawing room, which he entered leaning on, or rather clinging to Reginald, as if afraid he would again desert him. The traces of agitation were still visible in his face, for his grief for the loss of his son had been all awakened at sight of his

nephew, that son's once inseparable playfellow and companion, now come to fill his place, and succeed to all that should have been his. But the first burst of sorrow was over, and he again talked in his usual rambling, desultory way, of the worldly objects to which his soul still cleaved —his estates, his rents, his woods, his cattle, his improvements — every thing, in short, which could still minister to his pride.

" Glenroy has lost none of his hospitality since I left him," said Reginald, addressing Edith, as he passed, supporting her father to his seat; " and I daresay you can guess how unavailing remonstrance is at those times."

" He has only been making up for my omission, then," replied she, " as I forgot to ask whether you had dined—perhaps," she added, with a slight blush, " that is because I had never before had occasion to treat you as a stranger."

" Treat him as a stranger !" exclaimed Glenroy, angrily; " I'll have no strangers here. I never desire to see the face of a stranger within my door—remember that, Edith; and to treat

Reginald as a stranger! my own nephew—the man that you're to"——

"O, papa," interrupted Edith, hastily, "I beg your pardon, but you have quite misunderstood me. I did not mean—I"——

"No matter whether I've misunderstood you or not," cried Glenroy; "I say, once for all, that Reginald's not to be treated as a stranger in this house—he's to do as he pleases—Remember that, Reginald—you're to do exactly as you please. I'm getting old now, Reginald, and I've lost him that"——

Here grief for a moment got the better of his anger, and he groaned in the bitterness of his heart.

"My cousin does herself injustice," said Reginald, trying to soothe the weak and irritated feelings of the old man—"She received me with more kindness than I deserved," and he sighed as he said it.

"How could that be?" cried Glenroy, impatiently; "and to treat you as a stranger, too! And what would become of me, if it was not for you, Reginald, and of her too? Remember,

Reginald, you're just as much master here as if, —as ever my own poor boy was." Here another momentary gush of sorrow checked him, but quickly mastering it, he called—"Ring the bell, Benbowie—he's grown as deaf's a post. Ring it again—give it another tug—what the plague are those lazy dogs about?"

Then when the summons was answered by the butler and deputy, bearing tea and coffee, "It wasn't that I rung for, but you all make one errand answer for two, if there should be a dozen of you. There, Boyd, remember I desire you, and all of you, to treat Sir Reginald with the greatest respect, and to obey him the same as myself. You hear me? And desire Mrs Pattison to give us a supper like a dinner, and that quickly.—Now don't you interfere, Reginald," as his nephew was about to remonstrate, "I'm master here, and I'll do as I please; and it is my pleasure that you should be well treated, and do as you please—remember that, Edith.—And, Boyd, let all the servants have as much drink as they choose to-night, to drink Sir Reginald's

health and welcome home. Where's that idiot Molly Macauley, that she's not in the way?"

"I have missed my kindhearted, good-natured old friend," said Sir Reginald. "I hope she is not far off?"

But before Edith had time to answer, Glenroy, with the rambling garrulity of an infirm mind, had started another subject. "You would see, Reginald, that my tenants had got the principal premiums from the Highland Society this year. M'Laren, that's he that has the farm of Kildrunnach, you know, up Glendochart, the same land M'Taggart had a lease of before your time; he got no fewer than three premiums—one was for the draining of the Dhu Moss—you remember the Dhu Moss, Reginald, up beyond the Roebuck Park? Many a time you've shot a roebuck there, and the very last time Norman was out, he shot three with his own hand. He had become the very best shot in the country—yes he had; but there was not his match for any thing—nothing—nothing." Here another tide of fond recollection for a moment stopped the current of poor Glenroy's words;

but he quickly rallied, and resumed,—"You would observe the plantation on the Skirridale Hill, as you came along, Reginald? That's all new, and I'll venture to say, you never saw a finer plantation; and, by the by, Reginald, there's been some thinning of the wood since you were here, and I must cut some more—they're too thick, too thick a great deal. I'll give you a good portion with Edith, out of the thinnings of the Glenhaussen Wood, and you shall mark the trees yourself, Reginald; we'll ride up to-morrow and look at them, if you'll put me in mind.—Benbowie, ring the bell.—Do you hear, Boyd?—you'll send one of the men directly to the stables, to desire M'Nab to have my horse ready for me to ride to-morrow. I'll let him know at what hour—and he's to go directly. And stay, do you hear, Boyd?—he's to bring the black mare for Sir Reginald—the black mare," repeated he, as the servant left the room—"that was Norman's, and the handsomest creature I ever saw. M'Nab tells me Lord Allonby would give any money for her, but I'll not part with her; for what's money to

me, now that he's gone? But it's yours, now, Reginald; you shall have anything that belonged to him—you shall—you shall, Reginald. Aye, Lord Allonby wanted to have her, so M'Nab told me; that's he, you know, that courted Edith, when——"

"Oh, papa!" exclaimed Edith, in a deprecating tone, and blushing deeply, as Reginald turned upon her a look of surprise, which fixed into a piercing gaze of most earnest scrutiny.

"It's no secret, I'm sure," cried Glenroy, angrily; "and if it was, I'll have no secrets here, for the conceited puppy thought he might have her for the asking, I believe. But, upon my honour, Reginald, I would rather you had her, than any man living. I would, upon my soul! What's Lord Allonby, or any lord amongst them, to me? The king can make a lord any day, but I defy him to make the Chief of Glenroy; and that's what you'll be, Reginald, when I'm gone—and you're more to me than all the lords in the creation, now that I've no son of my own," grasping his nephew's hand in strong emotion. "And Edith shall be yours as soon

as we can get every thing settled; and, in the mean time, we'll take a ride to-morrow and see the trees marked; and, Edith, is there no word of that Molly Macauley, yet?"

In this sort of bald, disjointed chat the evening wore heavily away, without the lovers having an opportunity of conversing for an instant apart; for Glenroy would not suffer Reginald to stir from his side, and seemed even loath to lose sight of him when they separated for the night.

CHAPTER IV.

Hitherto Edith had felt chilled and disappointed. Reginald, it was true, had been so engrossed by her father, that it had not been in his power to devote himself to her, but he had not even looked as if he wished it. His air had been sad and abstracted, and only once had she seen his eye kindle with its wonted fire, and that was at the mention of Lord Allonby as her lover. The report had gone abroad (though without foundation) that he was an accepted one, and it might have reached Reginald, and hence all the mystery: he had been piqued, angry, jealous; and her father's words had merely conveyed the impression that she had rejected him as a suitor. But could Reginald then have believed her capable, even in thought, of breaking her plighted faith, and renouncing her first, her only

love? And would he have yielded her up to a rival without a word? Yes, generous and high-minded as he was, he would have disdained to remonstrate, but, O,—how he must have despised her! And Edith's cheek burned even at the thought. Then the strange expressions in his letter—his unaccountable delay in returning—his agitation at meeting—his abstracted and gloomy air—were all these to be referred to the same source? Yes—partly to that, and partly to the mournful circumstances under which they had met—the loss of Norman—the infirmities of her father, both in mind and body, must have shocked one who had so much cause to love him as Reginald had. And thus Edith strove to soothe her wounded feelings, and bar her breast against the admission of doubts worse than death. But all these reflections did not enable her to meet her lover with that easy, artless confidence of manner which had formerly rendered their intercourse so delightful. When they met at the breakfast-table, there was mutual embarrassment. Reginald seemed less sad, indeed, than on the preceding evening; but still there was none of that

gaiety, and playfulness of manner, which had been so often wont to call up the smiles on her cheek. His manners were all elegance and suavity, but they lacked the affectionate warmth of former days, and though his countenance was more than ever expressive of the fire and sensibility of his mind, still no bright or tender glance repeated the oft-told tale of fond, happy, youthful affection,—" the kind sweet smile of old."

The conversation, or rather talk, was carried on by Glenroy in the same strain of mingled pride, vanity, lamentation, and tautology. There was all the detail of the premiums, and the Dhu Moss, and the account of the new plantations greatly enlarged, and the anticipation of the thinnings, with the purpose for which they were to be applied; and then came the black mare, and Lord Allonby; and, at the mention of his name, Reginald, who had been sunk in a reverie, suddenly started, and again cast on Edith a look which seemed as if it would have pierced into her soul, and again the blood mounted to her temples at the suspicion it implied.

" I hope, Edith, you will be of our party to

Glenhaussen?" said he, gaily. "What a charming morning this is!"

"I have been little in the practice of riding for some time," replied she; "and am become such a timid horsewoman, that I fear I should only be an encumbrance."

"Where is it we're going, Reginald?" cried Glenroy. "O, aye! to look at the Glenhaussen woods. But what would take her there? Riding's not the thing for a lady. Lord Allonby, that's he that wants the black mare that I was talking about, (he courted Edith, too!) that belonged to my Norman—as if I would part with it to any man breathing, but yourself, Reginald; and that's not parting with it neither, for I hope you and I will never part, Reginald. You shall be as much master here as I am; and when you're married to Edith—— What have you dropped, Reginald? Edith, will you mind what you're about, and not set the table in a swim? And—and—why is that idiot, Molly Macauley, not here to make the tea wiselike? And we were speaking about riding—or what

was it? For I don't know what I am about; not that it's your fault, Reginald; but, Edith, you really have not been yourself since that puppy, Lord Allonby, put nonsense in your head."

Poor Edith was aghast at this accusation, accustomed as she was to the capricious garrulity of her father's temper. But the fact was, Glenroy, by one of the inexplicable contradictions of nature, even while indulging his spleen in chiding and censuring his daughter, sought, at the same time, to give her consequence in the eyes of his nephew, by perpetually adverting to the noble and wealthy suitor who had courted her alliance. Reginald seemed to feel for her confusion, for taking her hand, he said, with a look of almost fond entreaty, "Come now, Edith, don't refuse my first request; do go with us?"

"I will," said Edith, softly—"if you really wish it."

"Can you doubt it?" replied Reginald in the same tone.

But Glenroy seemed so bent on monopolizing his nephew's company and conversation, as to

grudge even a portion of it to his daughter, for he said peevishly, "It's not a woman's business we're going about; we're going to look at the Glenhaussen woods—Are we not, Reginald? Then what can she know about the thinning of woods—she knows enough when she knows she's to have them for her tocher, and not a bad one either, Reginald; M'Intosh tells me seven thousand pounds worth will never be missed—and as many more as you like. But I'll be hanged, if I would have given a single stick to that lord of yours, Edith. What cared I for him, and what was he to me?—a bit lowland lord, that has hardly a hill in all the Highlands now. But, Edith, dear, do as you like, and you shall have the first thousand of the cuttings to buy your wedding trumpery, and you'll get that fool, Molly Macauley, to help you.—What the plague's come over the creature?"

Reginald said nothing, but his countenance was overcast, and when Edith rose from the breakfast table, he neither repeated his request, nor reminded her of her promise; but as she was leaving the

room, she heard him say with quickness, "There can be no hurry as to marking the trees, Glenroy; —and if——" But here, Glenroy, with his usual impatience of contradiction, broke in—"No hurry! but I tell you there is a hurry, Reginald; and if it had not been for Norman's death, which I shall never get the better of"——Here a passionate burst of grief concluded the sentence, and Edith only learnt how the discussion had ended, when an hour afterwards she saw her father and lover ride off without her.

That Reginald was piqued and jealous, she thought was now certain, for how could she otherwise account for such capricious inequalities? From the moment of his arrival, her mind had been in too great a tremor to admit of her marking accurately the sudden changes of his manner—if she had, she would have drawn a very different inference. Edith's feelings were all too pure and devoted to allow her enjoying any womanish triumph at this supposed discovery; on the contrary, her gentle guileless heart was pained at the thought that she was the cause of uneasiness to

Reginald. A few words from her lips, she was sure would instantly remove it, and she therefore resolved to take the first opportunity of coming to an explanation with him, and of undeceiving him as to her fancied predilection for another.

CHAPTER V.

But it seemed as if Reginald avoided all opportunities of being alone with her. When he returned from his ride, he withdrew to his own apartment on the plea of having letters to write; and when he appeared at dinner, his air was still more melancholy and abstracted than it had yet been. Two or three chance visitors who had arrived, rendered the conversation rather more general, and by their county news diverted Glenroy's attention from being quite so exclusively directed to his nephew, though every subject that was started still bore some reference to him—to the Dhu Moss, the planting of Skirridale Hill, the thinning of the Glenhaussen woods, the Highland Society, the black mare, Norman, and Lord Allonby.

Edith flattered herself when she left the dining-room, that Reginald would soon follow her; she knew he disliked sitting long at table, and the party was not one to be upon any ceremony with: her father had a habit of remaining long after dinner, and as he became drowsy and confused, it would be an easy matter for Reginald to make his escape from him. But she waited in vain—Reginald came not; but soon she caught a glimpse of him from the window, as he slowly crossed the lawn, and disappeared in the woods that skirted it on one side. Edith could not restrain her tears at this new proof of Reginald's estrangement from her. "Oh, cruel that he is!" thought she, "thus to torture himself and me—could he act thus, if he loved me as I love him? No, no; surely he would seek an explanation, and end this mystery; and yet it is I who may be unjust. This fancied mystery may be nothing more than grief and self-reproach, and he is unwilling to give me pain by communicating his feelings. Ah, did he but know how sweet it would be to me to share in his every sorrow, he would not thus withhold them from me!"

Thus did Edith mournfully commune with herself till the evening was far advanced, when she was roused by the sound of an arrival, and in a few minutes Mrs Macauley's jocund tones saluted her ear, and presently she entered, all bustle, calling, "So he's come—where is he?—let me see him;" then suddenly stopping,—"But bless my heart, my dear!" she exclaimed, as she surveyed Edith with a look of surprise, "what is the matter with you? Is not your papa well, and your true love come home; and what makes you look as if you had been crying, then?"

"Oh, Macky, how can you ask?" said Edith, mournfully, "considering——"

"Well, my dear, I know what you mean, and it's very true, and I consider every thing, and you know very well yourself, what a sore heart it gave me when it happened. But you have sense to know, my dear, there's a time for every thing, and this is not the time for you to be crying for them that's gone, when you ought rather to be rejoicing at them that's come back. 'Deed I think so!"

"I am sure your return will rejoice us all,

Macky," said Edith, affectionately; "papa has missed you very much."

"'Deed, and I thought he would do that, for he has always been so kind to me,—and I thought sometimes when I was away, oh, thinks I to myself, I wonder what Glenroy will do for somebody to be angry with,—for Benbowie's grown so deaf, poor creature, it's not worth his while to be angry at him,—and you're so gentle, that it would not do for him to be angry with you; but I'm sure he has a good right to be angry at me, considering how kind he has always been to me." Then uttering an exclamation of joy as Sir Reginald entered the room, she flew towards him, and precipitated herself round his neck, uttering expressions of joy and delight, which were returned on his part with all the hearty warmth and ardour of his more refined welcome.

"And now," said she, releasing him from her embrace, and holding him at arm's length, "let me look at you—well, I declare you are ten times handsomer than ever you were, and you hold yourself up so well, you might pass for a

prince; and I would know that smile of yours among a thousand. O, I hope my eyes will serve me to take your picture some day—'deed I cannot help looking at you, for you are like, and yet you are not like what you was; you have not just the bonny bloom on your cheek that you had when you went away. What do you think, Miss Edith, dear?"

"I think Reginald *is* changed," said Edith, with a low sigh.

"All things change, you know," said Reginald, assuming an air of gaiety; "it was not to be expected that I alone, of all created things, should remain unchangeable, and return precisely the same individual I was a year ago; even you yourself, dear Macky, are somewhat changed—you are become still more *embonpoint*, still more youthful, and merry, and kind-hearted."

"Now, are you not flattering me, Sir Reginald? for though I like to be praised, I do not want to be flattered."

"You did not use to think me a flatterer, Macky?" said Sir Reginald, with a smile.

"'Deed, then, I don't think you are one now, my dear, for you always spoke the truth when you was a boy, and it is not likely you would change now, when you have got more sense and good principles. Now you need not colour up, Sir Reginald, for I'm not flattering you—I'm only just saying what I think; but, O my dears, what a happy meeting you would have! except, to be sure, that there was a reason for its not being so happy as it should have been; and indeed it would be a shame to us if we were to be as happy and merry all at once,"—and tears twinkled in her sunny eyes as she spoke. "But then, as I was telling Miss Edith, when I found her with the tears on her cheek, the time is gone by now, and we should not accustom ourselves to be melancholy, for it is a very bad habit; but once the distress is over, we should just wipe our eyes, and thank God for his mercies; and I'm sure I do it with all my heart," wiping her own eyes as she said it.

"I wish I had your philosophy, Macky," said Sir Reginald, with a sigh.

"Now, what for should you wish for any thing

belonging to me?" said Mrs Macauley, with a strong mark of interrogation, from which there was no escape.

"Don't be afraid," said Reginald, evading the question, "I would not rob you of it, even if I could—it sits so well upon you—you make such a good use of it."

"Now, as sure as any thing, you are flattering me, Sir Reginald! But I want to know what use you could have for what you please to call my philosophy—though, 'deed, to tell the truth, I do not know very well what philosophy is; but if you mean my contentment, I'm sure you cannot want that, when you have every thing to make you so contented and happy; you yourself so handsome, and with such a grand fortune, and a beautiful place, and an old family, and a title, and your own true love there, that"——

"True," exclaimed Reginald, abruptly—"what a charming evening this is—have you not been out, Edith?"

"No," replied she, in a tone of forced composure, "but I should like to take a stroll now."

"Then I hope you will allow me to attend you," said Reginald, colouring, and evidently embarrassed.

"Certainly," said Edith, in the same tone, and rising to prepare for her walk.

"But, my dears, have you had tea and coffee?" cried Mrs Macauley.

"I beg your pardon," said Edith, "I had forgot," and she rang the bell.

"I own myself too much of a Frenchman to dispense with my coffee," said Sir Reginald, seemingly relieved by the delay, while Edith left the room for her shawl.

"I really think that sweet creature's looking very ill," said Mrs Macauley, in a low voice, to Sir Reginald, after dismissing Boyd, and his satellite. "I thought the sight of you would have brought back the roses to her cheeks, and the smiles to her pretty mouth; but I think she looks almost as pale and mournful as she did before you came, and that's very extraordinary, is it not?"

"She certainly is much changed," said Sir Reginald, with a sigh.

"Aye, well, but for all that, I'll wager you have not seen the like of her among all the fine French and foreign ladies you have seen—tell me truly, have you?"

"Edith certainly *was* very pretty," replied Sir Reginald, in a tone that betrayed emotion.

"Well, my dear, but don't you be frightened for all that, and she'll soon be as pretty as ever she was; for she has a very good constitution, although maybe she does not look so stout as some of your great big fat people; and you know it is natural for her to be looking not so well, considering what distress she has suffered; and then, you know, she was so anxious about you, and so wearying for you to come home——"

"In spite of Lord Allonby?" said Sir Reginald, with a forced laugh.

"O, so you have heard about that already! But it would not be from Miss Edith herself, for she does not like the way Glenroy speaks about that at all."

Sir Reginald remained silent for a few moments, as if struggling with his emotion; then

sipping his coffee, he said, with affected careless-ness—" Ladies seldom dislike having their con-quests known, and my cousin has no cause to be ashamed of hers."

" 'Deed, I think not, for Lord Allonby is a very fine, handsome man, though he has no clan; he has a very good fortune too, they tell me, though it is but in the low country, which makes Glenroy look down upon him so much; many a one would not be so particular in these things as he is. Not that it was for that he refused him for Miss Malcolm, but you know she was as good as married to you."

" Edith liked him, did she not?" said Regi-nald, hurriedly.

" 'Deed, I don't know whether she did or not," replied the innocent, unsuspecting Mrs Macauley; " but you may ask her yourself," as the door opened, and Edith entered.

" Pshaw—nonsense," cried Reginald, crim-soning, while he tried to prevent Mrs Macauley from proceeding.

But if it is dangerous playing with edge tools,

it is no less so, to tamper with simplicity, so Mrs Macauley went on. "Well, if it is nonsense, where's the harm of it, for I declare I can't see it?" Then addressing Edith, "We were just speaking about you, my dear, and Sir Reginald was asking me if I knew how you liked Lord Allonby; 'deed, I said I did not know, but he might ask yourself."

Sir Reginald and Edith were standing almost opposite to each other; a slight blush and an expression of wounded feeling were upon her countenance, while strong agitation was depicted upon his, and if any one so graceful could possibly have looked awkward, he must have done so at that moment.

"If Sir Reginald wishes to know, he has only to ask myself," said Edith, calmly; and turning away, she seated herself at one of the farthest off windows, while he remained standing, as if still dawdling over his coffee, but with a flushed cheek and downcast eye.

"Well," cried Mrs Macauley, "I know very well you are both wishing me, as Glenroy,

honest man, sometimes says, sticking on the point of one of my own needles, just now when you have so much to say to one another; so now that I've had my dish of tea, I'll just go and make myself a little wiselike before Glenroy comes in, or he'll be noticing my cap, as sure as death, for you see how it is crushed with my bonnet."

"I—I—thought—were you not proposing a walk?" said Sir Reginald, trying to detain her.

"'Deed then, Sir Reginald, I have a great deal too much sense to think of troubling two tender young lovers with my company, but I'm sure it is very discreet in you to ask me. Now, go your ways, my dears—and let me see you walking arm in arm, so lovingly as you used to do—well, I dare say I'm almost as happy as you are yourselves!"

And away trotted Mrs Macauley singing, with the tears still upon her cheek.

A pause of some minutes ensued; at length, Reginald approached Edith, and in a voice which

vainly strove to appear calm, said, "I thought you had been going to walk, Edith?"

Edith made no answer, her heart seemed too full; but she turned upon him a look so soft and tearful, that Reginald involuntarily caught her hand, but as suddenly dropt it as he again encountered the ring his own had placed there, while the flush on his cheek turned to an almost ashy paleness.

At sight of his agitation, Edith mastered hers, and though her voice was almost inarticulate from her emotion, she said, "Reginald, what is it you seek to know?"

Reginald made no answer, and his agitation increased. Then again taking her hand, he almost crushed it in his, while, in a low suffocated voice, he murmured,—"How I can best make you happy!" A thrill of joy ran through Edith's heart at the words; for, blinded by her tears, she did not perceive the mute anguish of her lover's features, and for a few minutes both remained silent. But she was already happy, for her hand was locked in Reginald's, and she felt

assured that the time was now come when all would be cleared up. But at that moment Glenroy and his party came thronging into the room, and as he shuffled along, supported by a friend on one hand, and a stick in the other, he called,—

"Sir Reginald, you're here, and I did not know it! What made you leave me? But that's always the way, now! Have not you plenty of time to be courting, without leaving me alone this way? But, now that *he's* gone, nobody comes near me," as his friends placed him carefully in a sofa. "And where's Molly Macauley?"

"She will be here presently, papa," said Edith, trying to soothe him. "She is returned, and is merely making herself a little smart for you."

"What do I care for her?" cried Glenroy, peevishly; "Or what do I care for any woman? Reginald, come here and sit down beside me. Reginald, you're more to me than all the rest of the world put together; and you must never leave me. She shall be married to you as soon as you"——

"Your coffee waits, papa," said Edith, laying

her hand softly on his, as if to stop the current of his discourse.

"Well, let it wait. Set it down, Boyd; and —and—Reginald, I'll tell you what I'll do. You know the Skirridale woods, the — the Glenhaussen woods? M'Nab tells me I may cut ten thousand pounds worth to-morrow, if I choose; and—and". —

"Well, my dear uncle, we shall talk about that to-morrow," said Reginald, impatiently; "but some of us were projecting a walk, the evening is so fine." And he looked to some of the company as though he expected to be seconded.

"A walk!" cried Glenroy, contemptuously. "Who but silly women would think of walking at this time of night? Edith may go, if she likes, but I cannot part with you, Reginald, and, Auchnagruel, you may go with her,"—to a bashful, shining, red-faced laird, with large white ears, and a smooth powdered head, who awkwardly mumbled out his acquiescence, which Edith waived, while Reginald made another effort, but in vain, to disengage himself from his uncle's grasp.

"Stay you still, Reginald," cried he, holding

him fast; "and—and you shall have the black mare to-morrow. She's the greatest beauty—there's not her match in the country. I could lay a thousand guineas her match is not to be found in Scotland. That Lord—What do you call him, Edith? he that had the impudence to propose to me for her, and he would have taken you, too!"

"There comes Mrs Macauley, papa," said Edith, as that worthy entered, and with all her speed made up to her beloved Chief.

"O, Glenroy, how happy I am to see you!" exclaimed she, seizing both his hands; "And I hope you are happy to see me, too?" regarding him with an expression of unmingled delight.

"What should make me happy to see you?" demanded Glenroy, with a stare of astonishment—"the woman that I see every day of my life; that I've seen every day these forty years?"

"Well, but Glenroy, for all that, you have not seen me for well on to a week."

"A week! Where have you been? I never missed you!"

"O! Glenroy, I was told then you had missed

me very much," said poor Molly, in a tone of disappointment.

"Miss *you!*" repeated Glenroy. "I—I've somebody else that I miss. Reginald, you know who it is I miss; and you are to me now, what *he* was when I had him.—Old Molly Macauley, where have you been? Can you not settle yourself at home, but you must be going about sorning on people that you've no business with? You should stay away altogether, since you're so fond of it." Then, pushing away his cup, "That coffee's not drinkable; ring the bell for the tea-things; and, Mrs Macauley, you'll make tea for me, for that woman Patison can no more make tea than she can shoe a horse. And sit down here at my hand, for I know you like to scuttle with the tea-things, Molly; and, Reginald, you'll stay where you are on the other side—there's room for us all."

And thus, with a debilitated mind and despotic temper, Glenroy maintained an ascendency over all around him, and rendered them subservient to his will. Thus another insupportable evening was consumed; but Reginald's words had taken

a load from Edith's heart, and she felt assured that another sun would not set, without seeing them restored to their former happy state of mutual confidence.

CHAPTER VI.

With this hope she repaired to the breakfast table the following morning; but Reginald was the last to join the party, and when he did, he had the appearance of one who had passed a sleepless night. He looked pale and thoughtful, and did no justice to the good cheer Glenroy and Mrs Macauley heaped upon him with unsparing hand.

"What's the reason there's nothing at the table Reginald can eat, Edith?" demanded Glenroy, sternly.

"There is only too great a variety of good things," said Reginald, trying to deprecate the Chief's unjust displeasure. "I have been little accustomed to see such substantial breakfasts for some time."

"Substantial!" repeated Glenroy, still more

indignantly; "it's no breakfast at all.—Why is there no herring, Edith?—Ring the bell, Benbowie—that woman Patison's good for nothing. We never have a proper meal, now that your brother's gone. He looked better after these things. He would not have set you down to such a breakfast.—Boyd, what's the reason there's no herring at table? I never saw a breakfast without herring—Not in season yet? Don't tell me any such nonsense; I desire they may be in season to-morrow, and that there may be plenty of herring on the table after this.—And no game, is that not in season too? A pretty like breakfast for hungry men! Not in season! not in fiddlesticks; every thing must have its season now! in my day there were no seasons."

Reginald said nothing, but looked as if annoyed and oppressed by his uncle's overbearing hospitality.

"Well, Glenroy," said Mrs Macauley, "for my part I think this might satisfy a dozen of hungry men, and a score that are not hungry. But maybe Sir Reginald does not think so much of our Heiland breakfasts, now that he has seen

so much of the world. I have heard that in some strange countries they eat pine-apples, and grapes, and peaches to their breakfasts."

"And why have we not pine-apples, and peaches, and grapes here, Edith?" cried Glenroy. "What is the use of my having all these things, if they are not produced at proper occasions? But you give yourself no sort of trouble to please your cousin now. But ring the bell, and I'll send to the hothouses for some of those things.—Now, Reginald, you need not say a word.—Boyd, you'll desire M'Nicol to have every kind of fruit for breakfast after this. And bring some grapes directly; and I desire there may be fresh herring every morning. Is it because that puppy—that Lord Allonby, turned up his nose at herring, that we never see them now? And he had the impudence to want Norman's black mare! as if I would have parted with that to any man breathing but yourself, Reginald. She is yours now, and we shall take a ride today—What time will you be ready to go?"

Reginald looked embarrassed, and as if wishing to decline, without having an apology ready.

"Perhaps you would prefer a walk," said Edith, softly; then blushed, as if she thought she said too much.

"A walk!" repeated Glenroy, scornfully; "women are never happy but when they are walking. *I* can hardly walk a step now for that confounded gout; but I'll take a ride with you, Reginald, and we'll go to see the Dhu Moss, that's what M'Kinnon has drained forty acres of, and got a premium from the Highland Society. You—you remember the Dhu Moss, Reginald?"

Reginald coloured as he said, "I am afraid I shall be a dull companion for either a walk or ride, I have got so much of a headach this morning."

"A headach!" repeated Glenroy, in alarm; "how is that? But I very often have a headach myself, Reginald. But I'll tell you what, we'll not go out to-day—we'll just sit quietly here, and talk over some things that I want to speak to you about, and"——

"Excuse me, Glenroy," interrupted Sir Re-

ginald, impatiently; "but I am still more indisposed for business this morning. I suppose," he added, trying to force a smile, "I had taken too much of your champagne yesterday."

As he spoke, Edith passed into the drawing-room, and Mrs Macauley rose to follow; but first going round to Sir Reginald, she laid her hand upon his arm, and whispered, "My dear Sir Reginald, take my word for it, the best cure for both your head and your heart will be to take a little walk with your own true love.—I doubt there's something not right between you, for she's away with the tear in her ee—'deed is she. and it makes me wae to see her."

"What is it you are whispering about, Molly Macauley?" cried Glenroy, angrily; "can you not speak out?"

"'Deed, Glenroy, I was just saying that you ought not to hinder two tender young sweethearts from taking a walk together. Think how much they must have to say to one another after such a long separation."

"You are really a most officious goose, Mrs Macauley," cried the Chief. "What can they

have to say to one another, that they may not say before my face as well as behind my back, all the times of the day, if they like? Who hinders them from saying what they please?—I'm sure, Reginald, I've told you, you are as much master here as I am myself. You may say and do exactly what you please, for you're now the man that's to come after me——" Here his voice sunk at the thought of his lost son.

"I am very sensible of your kindness, Glenroy," said Sir Reginald, shaking his uncle's hand, as he rose from table; "and I wish I could make a better return for it," he added, with emotion. "In the meantime, I shall try to get rid of my headach, and be ready to attend you on a short ride before dinner." And he hastily left the room, as if to avoid all farther discussion.

He entered the drawing-room, where Edith and Mrs Macauley were, but the latter immediately vanished, singing—

"The luve that I hae chosen
 Therewith I'll be content,
The saut seas shall be frozen
 Before that I repent.

Repent it sall I never
Until the day I dee,
Though the lawlands o' Holland
Hae twined my luve and me."

Edith was arranging her drawing materials, preparatory to copying a drawing which lay before her, and which she had already begun.

"I ought perhaps to feel ashamed of your seeing my poor attempts," said she, as Reginald looked at the outline she had begun; "but," she added, looking on him with the clear and innocent expression of her soft eyes, "I do not wish to hide any thing from you, Reginald, however painful it might be."

"You have no cause," replied he, bending over the drawing, and seeming to examine it very attentively.

"To you, who have lately been seeing so many fine pictures in Italy, it must be a penance to be obliged to look at my poor scratches; but I don't even wish you to praise them. I should think you were either laughing at me, or deceiving me, if you did so."

Sir Reginald stood with his eyes still fixed on

the drawing, but his thoughts were evidently more profound; at last, he said, in a voice of deep emotion,—"It would be difficult to laugh at you, Edith; and, Heaven knows! I have no wish to deceive you!"

"I am sure you have not!" said Edith, with tenderness of tone and manner. "But, dear Reginald, are you not deceiving yourself?" And she blushed to crimson, as though she thought she had said too much.

Reginald made no reply, but shaded his face with the drawing he still held in his hand. After a pause, raising his head, he said, in a voice that vainly struggled at composure,—"I will not attempt to misunderstand you, Edith. You would tell me—that you——" He stopped, as if suffocating with emotion.

"Yes, Reginald," said Edith, tenderly, "I would tell you how much you have wronged yourself and me, if you ever supposed I, for an instant, could forget—Ah, Reginald, do you think I should have continued to wear this ring, if I had ceased to——" lôve you, she would have added, but the words died on her lips, and she bent her

head to hide the blush which glowed even to her brow.

Reginald took the hand she had half extended to him, and pressed it in silence to his lips, but some minutes elapsed ere he spoke; then, in a deep and faltering voice, he said,—" I believe you, Edith; my doubts are now ended. Say, when will you become mine?"

Edith started; for the accents in which this fond interrogatory was put, were any thing but those of hope and joy. She looked on her lover, and his face, even his lips were pale, and his features were contracted as if in agony.

"What is this?" exclaimed she wildly. "You are ill, Reginald! Oh, tell me why do I see you thus?"

" I *am* ill, Edith," said he, faintly attempting to smile; " but do not be alarmed—it is a mere spasm, to which I am occasionally liable; but it is past for the present, let us think no more of it." And, assuming an air of gaiety, he sought to quiet Edith's fears, and remove her suspicions, if she had any, as to the nature of his emotion. Edith was, of course, strenuous for medical

advice: but Reginald assured her it was merely the effects of the *malaria* he had had, when at Rome, and consequently a disorder not understood by the physicians of this country. "But time, and your good management, will perhaps enable me to get the better of it," he added, with difficulty suppressing a sigh, "if you are not afraid to undertake the cure."

"You had the *malaria*, then, and concealed it from me?" said Edith, reproachfully. "Ah, Reginald, if you had known what your silence cost me! but it was your tenderness for me made you conceal it from me; and you were ill while I was unjustly blaming you, perhaps——"

"No, no," cried Reginald, in agitation; "I ought—But—oh, Edith, had I flown to you at the first, it might not then have been too late; I should not have been the wretch I am!"

"Dear Reginald, do not reproach yourself so bitterly, you could not foresee how fatally our dear Norman's illness was to terminate."

"Fatally indeed!" re-echoed Reginald, as he leant his head on the table, and buried his face in his hands.

"Had you been here, you could have done nothing for my poor brother," said Edith; "he would not even have known you; and you see you are not too late to be a comfort to us."

Reginald looked up, and spoke more calmly, as he said, "You were always gentle and forgiving, Edith; but you know not the depth of my self-reproach," he added, with renewed agitation. "Edith, you see me broken in spirits, oppressed with remorse—the victim of a hopeless —malady," gasped he, striking his bosom; "yet, if I can but make you happy—I can bear it all—Edith, a brighter, happier destiny might be yours—but if you will unite yourself with me—let it be quickly—let there be no idle delay—there has been too much already."

A painful surmise now darted into Edith's mind; she had heard of the baleful effects of the pestilential fever at Rome, in even affecting the mind of the sufferer long after the cause had apparently ceased; and trembling at the dread suspicion, she knew not how to reply.

"Speak, Edith," he cried, impatiently, "do you repent?"

Edith cast her streaming eyes upon him with a look of tenderness and affection, while she slowly and distinctly uttered, "Never!"

"Enough!" cried Reginald, as he pressed his quivering lip to her hand; then, after a short pause, he said with calmness, "And now, Edith, I again entreat that there may be no trifling delays on your part; on mine every thing shall be done to accelerate matters; for that purpose I must now leave you for a time. I must go to Dunshiera; there must be much for me to do there, and the more, that I have now to prepare it, for its future mistress." His voice now faltered a little, and he stopped, but soon went on. "I have too long neglected it, but I must now live there for a part of the year if I can. I am aware of the opposition this will meet with from Glenroy; but much as I owe him, and desirous as I am, by every means in my power, to discharge my debt of gratitude, still I cannot devote myself wholly to him."

"It would be too much to expect," said Edith, with a sigh; "and yet, my poor father! how shall I leave him in his present state of

mind? and still worse, how will he bear your absence—you who are now every thing to him?"

"Yes," cried Reginald, again relapsing into agitation; "my father's mistaken tenderness for me has placed me in a cruel situation. I have incurred a load of gratitude to Glenroy, which crushes me to the earth; his house hitherto has been my home—but Edith—I cannot—I will not continue to drag out a useless existence here."

Glenroy's voice was at that moment heard loudly calling "Reginald," and presently he came slowly shuffling into the room, talking to himself as he was wont to do. At sight of Reginald and Edith, he exclaimed, "What's the meaning of this, Edith, you taking up your cousin's time this way? I have been wanting you, Reginald, about something of more importance than any thing she can have to say to you. Here's a letter from M'Gillivray, that's he that has the farm of Invercardnish—the sheep-farm, you know, that M'Intosh had, and made such a hand of, and——"

"I beg your pardon, Glenroy," interrupted Reginald, hurriedly; "but I can scarcely attend to that business at present—I—I—find I must go to Dunshiera."

"Go to Dunshiera!" repeated Glenroy, in astonishment; "what would take you to Dunshiera in such a hurry?"

"I ought to have been there long ere now, Glenroy," said Reginald; "I know I am much wanted, and more especially now," he added, with a forced gaiety, "that Edith has just consented to be mine, as soon as the arrangements can be made for her reception there."

"Consented to be a fiddlestick!" cried Glenroy, angrily. "Is that you, Edith, that's putting such nonsense in your cousin's head?" But Edith had made her escape as her father entered, to be spared the scene she feared would ensue. "Arrangements for her reception! what reception, and what arrangements can she want? Haven't you this house to live in, and as much room as would hold a dozen of you? and are not you just as much master here as I am, Reginald? and what would take you to a house of your own,

then? Consent!—reception!—arrangement!—What the plague!—there's no hurry in your marrying, Reginald; you must wait till we get the woods thinned, at all events; and—and whatever you want from your own house, you can send for it here; and bring your servants, and your horses, and all here; and—and—but you must not leave me, Reginald," grasping his nephew's hand in his.

"Only for a few days," said Reginald.

"Only for a few days!" repeated Glenroy; "and what am I to do without you for a single day? I'll tell you what, Reginald, if you'll wait till this confounded gout's out of my toe, I'll go with you myself, (if you must go,) and we can take Edith and Molly Macauley with us, if you like, and I'll stay with you as long as you please; I will, upon my honour."

Reginald certainly showed no symptoms of delight at this proposal, though he strove to utter some general expressions about happiness, gratitude, pleasure, and so forth.

"But my house and establishment cannot be in order to receive guests; only consider, my

dear uncle, that I have scarcely been there for more than a day at a time, since I left it a mere child."

"And what's to have put it out of order then, when there's been nobody living in it? Come now, Reginald, don't be obstinate, stay where you are, and do exactly as you like—you are completely your own master here, Reginald, as much as if you were in your own house; but I can't part with you, now that my own poor lad's gone. So stay where you are, and you shall have every thing you can desire—you shall have his black mare, Reginald, that—that—Lord—what do you call him, had the impudence to think I would sell to him."

Reginald saw it was in vain to attempt to use argument with Glenroy; he, therefore, conceded so far as to give up his intention of setting off the following morning, and even allowed him to remain in the belief, that he never should leave him for a single day. Of course, the poor Chief became ten times more tiresome and exacting than ever, under this accession of gratified affection; and though Reginald submitted with the

best grace he could, it was obvious he was writhing under the weariness and torment of being the engrossing object of a blind, despotic, doating attachment. Although politely attentive to Edith, in as far as he was permitted to attend to any thing but Glenroy and his never-failing themes, nothing particular occurred to call forth any marked demonstrations of the nature of his feelings towards her. Edith sometimes thought he looked sadder than any thing she had ever seen; but that she imputed to the poignancy of his feelings regarding Norman. Though she loved him the more for this proof of his sensibility, she trusted that time, and her tenderness together, would gradually diminish his sorrow and self-reproach.

CHAPTER VII.

"Do you remember your courting days, Benbowie?" said Mrs Macauley one day to the worthy Laird, as he sat, with a face of solemn stupidity, chewing his quid.

"Surely, surely," cried Benbowie, starting at the question, as some faint reminiscences of a rejected suit wandered through his brain.

"Because I don't know how it is, Benbowie—maybe the fashion's changed in that too, like every thing else, and that it's not genteel for people to look as happy as they used to do; but, as sure as death, if I was Miss Edith, I would not be pleased to see my sweetheart look so dull as he does sometimes,—he has not the canty face my good Mr Macauley had when we were going to be married—the laugh and the joke were never out of his mouth; and, I daresay, you yourself,

Benbowie, was merrier when you were thinking of matrimony than you are now?"

"True, true; it's a serious matter—it is, upon my conscience."

"O now, Benbowie, that's not what I mean at all."

Benbowie's eyes grew rounder, but he made no attempt to come to an understanding.

"What is there serious," continued Mrs Macauley, "in two handsome, rich, accomplished, sensible, well-born, well-principled, young creatures going to be married? I declare I think they ought both to be ready to jump out of their skins for joy."

"On my conscience it's very true, so they ought," responded Benbowie; "and it will cost nothing—her money will not go out of the family."

"O, who cares for the money, Benbowie? that's not the thing at all—it's true love I was thinking of, and that's a far better thing. I'm sure my Mr Macauley and I were as poor as two church mice when we were married, and for all that, we were as merry as two fireside crickets.

Oh! how I wish I saw Sir Reginald look upon his own true love with that heartsome smile that he had before he left her!"

"He's a fine young man," said Benbowie; "he is—he is—he is a very fine young man, Mrs Macauley, and he has a very fine property—on my conscience he has."

"Well, well, Benbowie; but I don't think you understand me,—I would rather see his smiles than his gold just now," raising her voice, as though the obtuseness lay in the physical, not the intellectual part of her auditor. But Benbowie only looked still more bewildered.

"Oh, Benbowie, I wish I could make you understand what it is I mean! and then I could know whether it is my own fancy, or whether it is the real truth, that—(for you know it would not do for me to give a whish of that, either to Glenroy or Miss Edith, for fear of distressing them, and there is nobody else I would like to say it to,)—but I would give all I have, to be quite sure that Sir Reginald is as happy as he ought to be!"

"His own estate is now quite free," said Benbowie, trying to look wise, "and he is next heir of entail to Glenroy."

"O, the stupid body!" thought Mrs Macauley, "how shall I ever get him to understand the difference between love and land? but maybe, after all, I am just putting nonsense in his head; and that it is just as Miss Edith thinks—sorrow for him that's gone, that makes her own true love look so mournful sometimes. How do I know what is in his heart? and then, when he catches Miss Edith looking at him, how he brightens up, and smiles, and jokes, in his own way, as he used to do. But then, again, I do not like to hear young people sigh—it is not naatural, whatever they may say of lovers' sighing, for I know my good Mr Macauley sighed none, for as happy as we were!"

Such were the *pros* and *cons* with which Mrs Macauley strove to solve the mystery of Sir Reginald's dejection; but the result of all her speculations only amounted to this, that Sir Reginald and Mr Macauley had been quite differ-

ent lovers. But it was not Mrs Macauley's nature to stop there. Having made nothing of Benbowie, she next began to wonder whether Glenroy had observed any thing. One day that she found herself alone with him, she began to sound her way. Seating herself beside her Chief, as he sat in his easy-chair, she wiped her spectacles, put them carefully on her nose, and began to ply her needle, while she said, "Well, Glenroy, are not we all very happy at having got Sir Reginald back again?"

"What earthly difference can his coming or going make to you, Molly Macauley?—*You're* not going to be married to him?" was the peevish reply.

"'Deed I am not; but surely, Glenroy, I may be very happy, though I am not going to be married?"

"I know no business you have to think any thing about happiness. If you had my gout in you, you would not be so happy, I can tell you."

"'Deed, and I believe that's true, Glenroy; but though I am very sorry that you have it,

yet ought I not to be thankful too that I have it not?"

"Well, don't torment me with your thanks, and your this, and your that.—Where's Reginald?"

"I'm sure I cannot tell, Glenroy. I hope he may be taking a little walk with his own true love, and that it will do him good; for as I was now saying, I do not think him quite—just—that's to say, I think—but maybe I'm wrong—that he's a little dowff just now."

"Dowff! what do you mean by dowff? I wish, if you will chatter, you would learn to speak intelligibly. What do you mean by dowff?"

"Just dull, Glenroy; as if he was not——"

"Was not what?" demanded the Chief, still more angrily.

"Was not—'deed I don't know how to express myself to please you, Glenroy; but I think he is not just so—just in such good spirits as I have seen him."

"Good spirits!" repeated Glenroy, bursting forth in all his majesty—"Good spirits! 'pon my soul, you're the most unfeeling—hegh—good

spirits too! and you, Mrs Macauley, that pretend to—but I never knew one of you women that were better than another. There's not one of you knows what feeling is—you think of nothing but your own idle amusements. Where's that girl gadding to now, and keeping Reginald from me!—Good spirits! good spirits in this house, after what I've lost! if you must have good spirits, Mrs Macauley, you must go somewhere else for them, for there's to be no good spirits here.—Good spirits! I really believe you, Molly Macauley, have just as much feeling as one of your own needles," stamping his stick upon the floor.

"Well, well, Glenroy, do not be so angry, for you know very well how bad my own spirits were at the proper time;—and—but you know there is a time for every thing, Glenroy. Now that it is past, I want every body to be happy, looking to Miss Edith's marriage."

"And what's Miss Edith's marriage to me, in comparison of the loss of my boy? And if she's to take away Reginald from me in this manner, what good will her marriage do to me? Can't

you go and see where he is? I want to speak to him about that tack of M'Kinnon's.—*Will* you go?" he exclaimed, with redoubled impatience, as Mrs Macauley carefully folded up her work, and then trotted off, not daring to dispute the commands of her despotic Chief.

"Well, there's no making any thing of Glenroy," thought she. "I wish I could find out from Sir Reginald himself what ails him, that I might try to do him some good."

Entering the library, she found the object of her anxiety seated with a book in his hand, on which his eyes were fixed, but with the air of one whose thoughts are afar off. He either did not observe, or took no notice of her entrance; but stepping up to him, she accosted him, "So, Sir Reginald, you are here all by yourself, when I figured you gallanting your own true love."

"If you are in search of Edith, you will find her, I believe, in the drawing-room, with some visitors," said Sir Reginald coldly, and without looking up.

Mrs Macauley stood irresolute for a few seconds, then looking him full in the face, she

said, in a strong tone of interrogation, "Oh, my dear, I hope you are not angry?"

"Not angry," replied Sir Reginald, forcing a smile, "only a little bored."

"O, well, if that be all, that's nothing to signify; maybe you'll be so good as tell me what it is that bores you, for I hope it is not me?" with the same interrogatory accent.

Sir Reginald made no reply but by a slight gesture of impatience. "Well, I cannot think what I could say that did not please you, my dear; I only said I thought you would have been taken up with your own true love, and I'm sure that could not anger you."

"Surely, Mrs Macauley," said Reginald, speaking very quickly and impatiently, "you have lived long enough to know, what every child knows, that the best things become stale and tiresome by constant repetition."

"My dear!" exclaimed Mrs Macauley, in an accent which testified she did not in the least comprehend the drift of this observation.

"You and every body else, I believe," said Sir Reginald, in the same impatient manner, "are

aware of the engagement between Edith and me; the delay in fulfilling it, is now on her part," added he, with increased agitation. "In the meantime, it is unpleasant to me, and must be painful to her, to have it made the perpetual theme of conversation, and for ever alluded to in the broadest manner, not only before strangers, but before the very grooms and footmen."

"And so that's the story, is it!" exclaimed Mrs Macauley, in astonishment. "Well, how could I ever have guessed that, when my good Mr Macauley liked so well to be joked about his marriage, and to have every body coming and rubbing shoulders with him! But I'm glad to think, that when you was looking so dull, it was only because you was not pleased; and now that I know what it is that angers you, I will never let on any thing about Miss Edith and you, and maybe it's genteeler not——" Here a furious peal from Glenroy's bell recalled Mrs Macauley to a sense of her duty. "Oh, and I forgot! there's Glenroy sitting in his dressing-room waiting for you all this time, and here's that worthy man Mr M'Dow coming," as the

door opened, and the head of Mr M'Dow protruded itself, quickly followed by his whole person. Sir Reginald, scarcely able to conceal how much he was annoyed, was hastily passing him with a slight bow, and a sort of murmured apology, but he might as easily have attempted to escape from the arms of a man-trap after having touched the fatal spring.

"How do you do, Sir Reginald?" with a violent shake of the hand. "I rejoice to see you back again—better late than never, hoch, ho;—but I can't say you've brought any Italian beef upon you. I doubt you've been rather ailing: but I've no doubt the air of the Highlands, and the sight of a certain fair lady, will set you all to rights again." Sir Reginald bit his lip, and made no reply. Mr M'Dow went on—"I'm afraid you must think I've been rather deficient in my duty, in not having waited upon you before now; but the fact is, I've suffered a great deal from the toothach this summer, and at last I was obliged to get my tooth taken out. A most dreadful thing it is the pulling of a tooth, and mine was an uncommon strong one! 'Pon

my word, I thought at first my head was off. However, I was much amused with an anecdote the dentist told me—for I went all the way to Glasgow to get it taken out in the best manner—though bad's the best, hoch, hoch, ho! But, as I was going to tell you, the dentist, Mr Bain, really made me almost laugh; though, to tell the truth, I was very much down in the mouth at the time—hoch, hoch, ho!—A gentleman (he would not tell me his name, but he's a justice of the peace) had come to him to get a tooth taken out, but after Mr Bain had him fairly in the chair, there he sat with his lips screwed together like a vice: "Be so good, sir, as open your mouth a little," says Mr Bain, "and allow me just to put in my finger to feel your tooth."

"Na, na," says the Justice, "I'll no do that, you'll bite me!—hach, hach, hach, ho!" Even Sir Reginald's features relaxed, for a moment, into a smile, at the overwhelming, vulgar jocularity of Mr M'Dow, while he made another attempt to extricate himself from his grasp, but in vain.

"Excuse my detaining you for one moment,

Sir Reginald," said he, grasping him still more firmly; "but I think it proper to let you know that I shall have occasion to be absent again very shortly for a few days—it's upon a most agreeable occasion, to be sure—no less than a marriage that's to take place in our family—my niece, Miss Alexa M'Fee—that's the eldest daughter of my sister, Mrs Dr M'Fee—is on the point of marriage with a very fine young man just set up in business in London, Mr Andrew Pollock: it's been a long attachment, like some others that I know, Sir Reginald—hach, hach, ho! but the means were wanting,—however, now they think they'll be able to do—and so the marriage is fixed to take place this day se'ennight, and nothing will satisfy them but that I must perform the ceremony; but then, on the other hand, I consider my old engagement to you as paramount to every thing else of the same nature, so I wish to ascertain that the one may not interfere with the other, for that would really place me in a most awkward dilemma."

Reginald's face had gradually been crimsoning during Mr M'Dow's speech, and, with a haughty

bend of the head, he merely said, "I beg, sir, I may not stand in the way of any of your engagements;" then quickly extricating himself from him, he left the room.

"Aye," exclaimed Mr M'Dow, in a tone of amazement, "I don't know very well what to make of that! I suspect the Baronet's not over and above well pleased at my not having waited upon him sooner. I'm sure I'm at a loss how to act, for it will be a dreadful disappointment to 'Lexy, poor thing! if I should fail her; and yet I would be very loath to disoblige Sir Reginald and my excellent pawtron, Glenroy, to say nothing of the disappointment to myself."

"Oh, Mr M'Dow," said Mrs Macauley, "that's not the thing at all—things are not just come to that yet; but what's made Sir Reginald not just so well pleased is, that he does not like to be joked about his marriage—he says it's not genteel."

"Oh, that's it, is it?" cried Mr M'Dow, in a tone of surprise. "Aye, aye! I had no notion of that giving any offence! and yet I don't think I said any thing that could be taken amiss; for

I'm sure the allusions that I made were of the most delicate nature. But there's a fashion in these things, it's one that I don't think I'll ever be tempted to follow;—though there's no saying, for, as my worthy mother says, there's nothing so catching as fashion; and as I live much in fashionable society now, perhaps I may just grow neebor-like, and become a fashionable myself—hach, hach, ho!"

"Well, for my part," said Mrs Macauley, "I hope I may never turn into a fashionable; for, I think, one had better be merry and happy, even though it should not be the fashion, than be mournful and genteel, as Sir Reginald is grown. Do you know, Mr M'Dow," in a confidential whisper, "I did not just like his look sometimes—I was beginning to think—I don't know what!"

"O, you're quite wrong there, my good lady," said Mr M'Dow, with a self-sufficient air, taking a pinch of snuff as he spoke, "quite wrong—it's mere fashionable awpathy, nothing else; I've always kept free from it myself, for I can't say I admire it, but it's creeping in. There are some young ladies in this country that I could mention,

that I've known give themselves great airs of awpathy."

"By the by, Mr M'Dow, have you seen the young Lady Dunross, pretty Miss Lucy Malcolm, since her marriage?" said Mrs Macauley, quite unaware of Mr M'Dow's susceptibility on that score.

"O yes," returned he, with an air of contemptuous indifference; "she has got well married, which was more than I thought she would, for she was very high set, and rather gave herself airs above herself at one time; but as I've come to spend the day with my worthy friend Glenroy, and it's getting near dinner-time, I suspect I must be going to clean myself a little before dinner." And away he stalked to the chamber, which, from frequent occupation, had now become, in a manner, his own property.

Glenroy's gout confined him to his own apartment for the rest of the day, but Sir Reginald took his place and did the honours with so much grace and spirit, and exerted himself so effectually, that it must have been a more accurate

observer than any that were present who could have discerned the force he was putting upon himself.

CHAPTER VIII.

One of the many acts of penance the Chief thought fit to impose upon his family, was that of reading the newspapers to them every morning during a long protracted breakfast,

> " And labour dire it was, and weary woe,"

for quick ears to keep pace with his tedious utterance, and intermingled comments, although he rarely condescended to read the fashionable intelligence, so called. One morning he chanced to stumble on the following paragraph:—" We have to congratulate the noble youth of Britain on the arrival of the beautiful and fascinating Baroness Waldegrave at her mansion, St James's Square, after an absence of several years on the Continent. Her ladyship is accompanied by her mother, the Lady Elizabeth Malcolm." Here

Glenroy made a full stop, as if he had come suddenly upon some unlooked-for and unwelcome object; then muttered—" Ay, that's my pretty lady, and that other—that's the what-do-you-call her—the bit white-faced lassie that she had here with her—the creature you never could bear, Reginald?" Reginald's head was at that moment resting on his hand, which shaded his face, but he had the air of being too deeply engaged by a letter which lay open before him, to hear himself thus called upon, at least he made no answer.

" You mean, Florinda, papa," said Edith— " O, how I should like to see her again!"

" I never desire to see the face of her," cried Glenroy, " an upsetting, spoilt brat. What was it you used to call her, Reginald? the skim-milk cheese, wasn't it?"

But Reginald still looked upon his letter, and was silent.

" Is that a cess letter that you've got, Reginald? I've got one too, and so has Benbowie.— It's from M'Intosh, is it not?"

" I—I—beg your pardon," said Reginald, looking up, and speaking very fast—" yes, I sup-

pose—I believe—I think—yes—I mean M'Intosh is the name."

"Aye, I thought so, it will just be the same as my own, and I'm not at all satisfied as to the collecting of the cess. I think there's great mismanagement—and——"

"O, you have not read the whole paragraph, papa," cried Edith, glancing at the paper which Glenroy had laid down. "It adds, 'the young Baroness is said to be the Venus of Apelles realized, and combines with the beauty and delicacy of the English fair, the softness and grace of the Italian, with the gaiety and brilliancy of the French. We may therefore anticipate the *éclat* which will attend so rare and perfect a combination, when it bursts on an astonished world!' Did you never happen to meet with Florinda, when you were abroad, Reginald?" enquired Edith, as she still scanned the paper.

"Yes," answered Reginald, hesitatingly; then turned to Glenroy, and resumed the subject of the cess.

"And I hope you made up your old quarrel, and were friends?" said Mrs Macauley.

But Reginald was too much engrossed with his subject to hear the question. Edith took advantage of the first pause to say, "How came you never to mention her to us, Reginald?"

"Mention an old tobacco pipe!" cried Glenrey, angrily, "What was there to mention? I daresay Reginald had more sense than to trouble his head about such an insignificant creature as that—a spoilt, troublesome monkey, that there was no living in a house with."

"O, but Glenroy, you must not speak that way of her now, that you hear she has turned out so well," said Mrs Macauley, always charitable in her judgments, and credulous in her belief; "and I daresay Sir Reginald will give her a very good character now—I'll wager any thing they would make it all up—am I not right, Sir Reginald?"

"Lady Waldegrave was much admired," said Reginald, in a cold constrained manner.

"What a cautious answer, and how unlike you, Reginald," said Edith with a smile; "but don't expect to get off so easily; I must have a full and particular description of her—for, in spite

of you, I always loved Florinda. I scarcely think she met with justice from you."

"Perhaps not," replied Sir Reginald, in the same abrupt, laconic manner.

"Well then, you will make it up now by giving us a faithful representation of her, or, as dear Macky says, by giving a good character of her."

"What the plague does it signify whether her character's good or bad?" cried Glenroy, in one of his transports; "the character of the man that's to be collector of our cess is of more consequence, I think, than the character of an idle dancing *dorrity* like that—a creature that your brother—Here, Sir Reginald, come back; 'pon my soul, this is insufferable! you women, with your chatter, you've driven him away from the table! I really wish you would learn to hold your tongues when you see we're engaged in business.—Reginald!—aye, there he's off, and he's away out without his hat! You women really are—hem"——

And Glenroy was obliged to break off, for want of words to express his indignation.

"Well then, as sure as death, Glenroy," responded Mrs Macauley, "I think we behave ourselves very well, and speak very little, considering. I'm sure I could speak a great deal more than I do, if it was not for fear of angering you; and I'm sure Miss Edith speaks less than any body. But wasn't it naatural for her to be rather inquisitive about the little creature she used to be so fond of? 'Deed I think it was; for how was she to think that Sir Reginald and she had not made it up, the spiteful thing that she must be? for I know it would not be his fault, he is so good-natured, and generous, and forgiving to his enemies."

But Benbowie, having found some knotty point in his cess letter, was now applying to his Chief to solve it for him; and thus Glenroy's wrath was for the moment appeased, and his attention excited, and the abuses of the cess seemed to afford them what is called subject-matter for some hours to come. When Reginald joined Edith in the drawing-room, he looked ill and dejected; and, in answer to her timid and gentle enquiries, he admitted that he had had a slight

spasmodic attack during breakfast, but that it was nearly over for the present.

"I flattered myself," said he, "they had left me, as I have been less subject to them of late; but one is commonly the prelude to others. Now don't be alarmed," he added, with a faint smile, "although you see me what you ladies would call somewhat nervous, occasionally—in time, I trust, I shall get the better of it," and he sighed as he said it.

"I fear your feelings are too acute for your peace, Reginald," said Edith, mournfully, as she gently laid her hand on his arm. Reginald looked on that hand for a moment, with a strange contraction of brow, and something like a recoil; then suddenly changing, he took it in his, and said, in a voice that faltered with emotion—

"When once this hand is fairly mine, I shall be better, much calmer, I am sure I shall."

"You know it will ere long be yours," said Edith, and her colour deepened while she added, with simple earnestness, "and in the meantime, you cannot doubt that my best affections—that my heart itself, is wholly—solely yours."

"O that I were worthy of it, Edith," said he, in a melancholy accent; "and yet," he added, with emotion, "if you could but read mine, you would there see that its first desire is for your happiness."

"Yes, I am sure—I feel—it is!" said Edith; "but the way to make me happy, is to be happy yourself."

"Well then, let us now settle something, Edith," said he, rapidly; "I shall go to Dunshiera soon; but since it is your desire, I shall make no alteration upon it. The credit of the improvements shall be yours. Glenroy expects his lawyers in a few days, who will arrange all matters of business, and then—and then, Edith," added he, with a strong gasp, "you will surely put it out of the power of fate to divide us?"

Edith sighed, even as she smiled an assent; for the time she had fixed for her marriage was the expiry of her mourning for her brother.

CHAPTER IX.

Although Glenroy's gout was much on the decline, it still confined him to his couch for the greater part of the day, during which either his bell or his voice was to be heard resounding, indicative of the restlessness and impatience of its master. The following morning, as the family sat at breakfast, a peal was heard from the bell, which surpassed all the peals that had yet been rung, followed by another, and another, in such quick succession, that only a flash of lightning could possibly have had time to answer the summons.

"I think I hear Glenroy's bell," said Benbowie, holding up his ear, and looking wise.

"'Deed, Benbowie, we may all hear that at the deafest side of our heads," said Mrs Macauley, "as sure as death, he'll ring down the house."

"Something more than common has surely disturbed him," said Edith, rising, when, at that moment, the Chief's valet entered to say that Glenroy wished to see Sir Reginald *immediately.*

"Something about a new lease, or an old bridge, or some such parish matter," said Reginald, carelessly, and he rose, and was sauntering out of the room, humming an air to himself; then looking back, as he saw Benbowie groping in the direction of his plate, he called, "May I beg, Edith, that you will not allow Benbowie to mistake my cup for his own?"

Edith sat patiently waiting Reginald's return for a considerable time; but still he came not, and all was silent.

"Oh, this is really not fair in Glenroy to keep Sir Reginald from his breakfast," said Mrs Macauley.

"Is Sir Reginald not coming back to his tea?" enquired Benbowie, with a face of solicitude, for it was one of his peculiarities to cast a sheep's eye at other people's viands, even when surrounded by a profusion of untouched

dainties. So, baulked in his design, he betook himself and his newspapers to his own corner.

Mrs Macauley was too busy and active to indulge long over the pleasures of the table, and she likewise trotted away, weary of wondering what was keeping Sir Reginald.

At length Reginald returned, but his features still bore the marks of recent agitation; and although he had a perfect composure of manner, either real or affected, yet his hand trembled as he raised the cup to his lips.

"I have had another of those foolish spasms," said he, "occasioned, I think, by the heat of Glenroy's room, though he would fain persuade me it is flying gout, and we have consequently had a long and interesting discussion on gout and malaria. He tells me my father had it in his constitution, which I never knew. But I beg pardon, Edith, you are waiting for me. O, by the by, Glenroy has had a letter from—from Lady Elizabeth; a letter offering to pay him a visit here, which has of course agitated and annoyed him."

"An offer of a visit from Lady Elizabeth!"

exclaimed Edith; "that is indeed very strange, after so long a separation. Don't you think so?"

"Rather," replied Reginald.

"How does papa take it?"

"I can scarcely tell. He seems both for and against it. He is, you may believe, very unwilling to receive the visit, and yet still more unwilling to decline it. He begged me to mention it to you, and talk it over."

"What can have prompted such an offer at this time?" said Edith, still rapt in amazement. Reginald was silent.

"Does she assign no reason for so strange a proceeding?" enquired Edith. Reginald hesitated for a moment; then, with a deepening colour, replied, "Sympathy is the motive assigned. She wishes to condole personally with your father and you in your affliction;" and he sighed deeply.

"Ah, how very kind!" said Edith; "much more so than I should have expected from Lady Elizabeth, either from my own recollection of her, or from any thing I have ever heard of her. Perhaps she is much changed, and, if it is so,

papa and she may yet live happily together, and then, you know," she added, with a rising colour, "he could better spare you when——"

"O, impossible; they are so totally different, and Lady Elizabeth is such an invalid, so constantly complaining—their habits are so dissimilar—so—in short, their ever living together is out of the question; she only proposes remaining for a week or two."

"At least there can be no harm in trying the experiment for a week or two; that will soon pass away, whether pleasantly or not. But does she say nothing of Florinda? Won't she come too?"

"I suppose—I believe—of course—here, Fido," to his dog, as he placed a saucer on the floor, with some milk and water, and bent down, as if deeply interested in the common action of Fido's lapping his breakfast.

"Oh, how delighted I am!" exclaimed Edith, her eyes sparkling with animation. "I cannot tell you, Reginald, how much I have longed to see her again, my recollection of her is so vivid! I am sure I shall love her, she was such an

engaging creature; and you remember how often I used to make up your little quarrels together? I am resolved to make you both good friends for evermore."

Reginald made no immediate reply, for he was still occupied with his dog. At length he said, in a cold constrained manner, but without raising his head,—"Excuse me, Edith; but we view this matter quite differently. I have already advised Glenroy to decline the visit."

"Ah, Reginald! how could you be so unkind?" exclaimed Edith, in a tone of reproach.

"Because I thought it my duty," he replied, almost sternly.

"But you may have mistaken it, dear Reginald," said Edith, gently. Reginald was silent. "And will papa, then, not receive them?" enquired she, with a sigh.

"I cannot tell. He was much perplexed, and asked my advice, which I gave him, although it was not pleasant for me to be the umpire in such a matter."

"Tell me, Reginald, is it your dislike to

Florinda that makes you so averse to receiving the visit?"

Sir Reginald did not immediately reply; when he did, he said, very coldly,—"I never said I disliked her."

"No—but I suspect you do," said Edith, looking at him with a soft smile; "and I long to reconcile you."

"You had better not try," said Reginald, sternly; then added, in a voice of repressed emotion,—"This visit can be productive of no pleasure—they are so different—they are both so unsuited to this place."

"But, for a short time, it matters little," said Edith.

"Even for a short time, I am sure the visit will annoy your father, they will bring such a *suite* along with them. Lady Elizabeth has her travelling physician—and—and—there is a French lady—a friend——"

"But there is plenty of room, and we are accustomed to receive every body. How unkind, then, it would be to refuse such near connexions!

Now, come, dear Reginald, do persuade papa to accept the visit."

"That might be the test of my obedience, but not of my love," said he, bitterly. While he spoke, Glenroy's bell had been sounding a larum, and now a servant entered in all haste, to say, Glenroy wished to know what was detaining Miss Malcolm, and to desire she would bring the letter immediately.

"O, by the by!" exclaimed Sir Reginald, in some confusion, "I had almost forgot Glenroy charged me to show you the letter, and to request of you to answer it."—And he drew forth a letter, and laid it before Edith. She took it from its envelope, and at the first glance exclaimed,—"Florinda Waldegrave! I thought the letter had been from Lady Elizabeth."

"'Tis much the same thing, is it not," said Reginald, "whether I write a letter, or you do it for me? The letter is virtually Lady Elizabeth's."

"What a pretty, elegant, little hand she writes!" exclaimed Edith, as, without farther comment, she began to read, as follows:—

"My dear Sir,

"At mamma's request, and in accordance with my own feelings, I beg leave to express to you the deep sympathy we feel on the mournful event which has taken place in your family. The early recollection of your kindness to me, and the tender affection I always cherished for you, and my dear brother and sister, (for such I ever considered them,) remain indelibly impressed upon my heart; and I wish nothing more earnestly than to be allowed an opportunity of proving to you how sincerely I participate in your affliction. Mamma is equally desirous of convincing you, that, however circumstances may have unfortunately separated her for so long a period from you, she has ever retained a lively interest in your welfare, and that of all dearest to you. Should it not, therefore, be deemed an intrusion on your grief, we shall have much pleasure in being allowed to join your domestic circle, and pass a week or two with you quietly at Glenroy; when it will be our most earnest study to endeavour to mitigate your sorrow, by every

means in our power. Mamma unites with me, in every heartfelt wish for your health and returning happiness. And, with kindest love to my dear sister Edith, I have the honour to be, my dear Sir,

"Your very sincere and obliged servant
and daughter,
"FLORINDA WALDEGRAVE.

"P.S. Mamma entreats you will not put yourself to the slightest inconvenience on her account; for, although somewhat delicate, she is not at all particular as to her accommodation; and as for me, you may put me in the turret, with which you used to threaten me when I was a naughty troublesome little girl."

"It is a very kind letter," said Edith, with a sigh, as she finished it. "And yet——" She stopped.

Here another message from Glenroy admitted of no farther delay, and Edith was hastening to satisfy his impatience, when Reginald stopped her.

"Do not allow any thing I have said to prejudice you against Lady Waldegrave," said he, in agitation. "I ought not to have given an opinion—I—do not let me think I have injured her in your estimation, Edith."

"No, no," cried Edith, hastily, as a perfect volley of bell-ringing caused her to fly.

"Are you to be all day writing that letter, Edith? is it not done yet?" were the queries that greeted her on her entrance.

"I beg your pardon, papa; but I have not had time."

"Not had time! you've had time to write at least a dozen of letters—it's really intolerable; what's the use of you women learning to write at all? you should all keep to your needles and thread, like that idiot, Molly Macauley, and not torment people with your trash of letters this way. Have you not written the one I desired you yet?"

"It is not five minutes, papa, since Reginald showed me the one you had received from Lady Waldegrave."

"That's not the letter I am speaking about;

it's the one I desired you to write in answer to that."

"I understand you, papa; but I really have not had time since."

"I tell you, the letter might have been half way to London by this time."

"My dear papa, you know the post does not leave this, till the evening."

"That's nothing to the purpose; your business was to write the letter when I desired you."

"I will write it directly, papa, if you will be so good as tell me what I am to say."

"How often am I to tell you what to say? I told you already, or at least I told Reginald, which is the same thing."

"Reginald said you did not seem inclined to receive the visit."

"How can I be inclined to receive a visit, lying in my bed here? It's a most senseless and unfeeling proposal."

"It must be kindly meant," said Edith, gently; "and, dear papa, sympathy ought always to be kindly taken."

"Sympathy! what good will all the sympathy in the world do to me! it will not bring back him that I've lost."

A pause of some minutes ensued.

"You may be quite well before Lady Elizabeth comes, papa," said Edith; "and if not, you will at least have shown your hospitality and good-will; but yet, if the thought of it is so unpleasant to you, to be sure the visit had better be refused, than that you should suffer."

"You don't know what you're speaking about! If I'm well, and if I'm not well! how can I tell whether I'm to be well or ill? I wish both these ladies of quality had my gout in their fingers and toes, to settle them, and keep them from disturbing me in this manner. And there's Reginald, he has got the gout too, or I'm mistaken; his father had it when he was not much older than he is now; but if he could get it to fix in his foot, there would be no fear of him.—But what's the reason you have not written that letter, Edith?"

"I will write it now, papa, if you will only tell me what you wish."

"How can I tell you what I wish? Can't you ask Reginald, and he'll tell you what I wish."

"Reginald and I don't quite agree about it, papa."

"Reginald and you don't agree! And do you really pretend to disagree with the man you're to be married to? and before you're married to him! I never heard of such a thing in my life, as people not agreeing before they were married—not agree with the man that's to come after me!"

"Reginald and I are very good friends, papa, and we shall be quite agreed when we know your wishes on this subject; but he is of opinion that it would be better to decline the visit; and I——"

"He's quite right—much better—what the plague brings them here now? After staying away so long, they'd better have staid altogether. The mother not particular!—there's not a more troublesome, particular woman in the kingdom than she is!"

"Then I shall *write and say the state of your*

health prevents you receiving their kindly meant visit at this time, or something to that purpose, papa?" said Edith, and she was leaving the room.

"The state of the fiddlestick!" cried Glenroy, peevishly; "I wish you would not be in such a hurry—what's the matter with my health? You women are always so impatient and so ready with your pens! what is there in the state of my health to keep people from coming to the house? —you speak as if I had the plague! I've had a touch of the gout in my toe, which is now almost gone, and I'm better than I've been for months, and how can I tell people they're not to come to my house? It's a thing I never did in my life, and I'm not going to begin now; I wonder how you could propose such a thing, Edith, to refuse to admit a woman of rank, and my own wife too, within my door, and for two or three days; and her taking such a journey, poor thing! on purpose, and all for my poor boy! it's a piece of respect to him, and it says a great deal for her, and she shall be welcome to the best in my house for his sake."

Here poor Glenroy began to weep, and Edith, distressed and perplexed, after soothing him as well as she could by turning his thoughts to another channel, left him to have again recourse to Reginald for advice and assistance. But Reginald had set off to join a shooting party, and had left word he should not return till late in the evening. Edith had, therefore, to write the letter without farther communing. Upon showing it to her father, he of course scolded and protested against it, and swore he would not receive any such visitors; but, at the same time, desired the letter might be sent off, accepting the visit.

CHAPTER X.

Mrs Macauley's astonishment on being made acquainted with this revolution (or rather restoration) was excessive.

"Well, Glenroy," cried she, as she repaired to his sitting-room, brimful of the subject, "I'm sure we may well say, wonders will never cease! As sure as death, I could hardly believe Miss Edith when she told me! To think of your lady coming back to you of her own accord, after staying so long away from you. Of all the wonderful things I've met with, and I have met with a good many in my day, this is the most extraordinary."

"I see nothing in the least extraordinary in the matter," said Glenroy, with dignified composure.

"O, that must be because you are so wise,

Glenroy; for I have heard that very wise people are never surprised at any thing, which I think very extraordinary, considering what curious creatures we are, and what wonderful things we meet with both by day and by night. It was but just the night before last I had such a curious dream;—but I'm not going to tell it to you, Glenroy,"—as she saw a volley ready to burst forth—"though I must always think it very uncommon that I should have dreamed such a dream at the very time your lady was coming back to you. I'm sure I hope she will behave herself now."

"Behave herself!" repeated Glenroy, wrathfully; "I wish, Mrs Macauley, you would learn to behave *yourself*, and not give your tongue such a license."

"Well, what did I say was wrong there, Glenroy? for 'deed I do not think she behaved so discreetly as she might have done to you; but now that she has seen her fault, to be sure we should not speak about what's past; and I daresay she will make you a good, and an obedient, and a well-behaved wife in all times to come;

for once she comes here, I doubt if she'll be for going away again. 'Deed, I wondered at her leaving you when she did."

"And what right had you to wonder any thing about it, Mrs Macauley? And where was the wonder of her going to look after her daughter's fortune at the time she did? She acted like a sensible, prudent woman; and now that she has secured that, and got the girl properly educated, the first thing she does is to show her respect for me by bringing her back to me: but I daresay, one reason of her leaving this was, that the child might not be corrupted by you. You would have been a fit person to have educated a peeress, to be sure! You've made a fine hand of Edith, to be sure."

"O fie, Glenroy," cried Mrs Macauley, kindling a little at these aspersions, "I wonder to hear you! 'Deed, I don't think it sets you to speak in that disparaging way of your own daughter, and her so sweet, and pretty, and genteel, and so much admired; and I wonder you should set up the other one, considering what a little spoilt, impudent monkey she was, and

'deed I don't believe she's much better yet; for you see Sir Reginald has never said a good word of her, and I really think he cannot bear the name of her."

"You're an old goose, Molly Macauley, and don't know what you are speaking about. I asked Reginald if he had any fault to find with her, and he said none in the world; and he said as much as that they had been upon a good enough footing when they met; and I know it was only his fear of their disturbing me that made him unwilling to admit them here, for he thinks more of me than any of you, I know that—and he's everything to me now—so take you care, Mrs Macauley, that you behave yourself properly."

"O, Glenroy, as if ever I could behave myself improperly to anybody, especially to your lady and your step-daughter. I'm sure I shall put my best foot foremost to please them. And I'm just thinking what little marks of my respect I can contrive for them, that will be something out of the common." After much deliberation, she at last decided upon what she deemed a meet

and appropriate offering for Glenroy's lady—in the form of a visiting card-case with a view of "The Castle" on one side, and on the other, a full length representation of the Chief in the Highland dress; while Lady Waldegrave was to be made happy with a gown, tamboured in coloured silks, with what the artist called a running pattern, of heather and thistles of her own contriving. Benbowie, who had only one mode of testifying emotions either of grief or joy, ordered a new waistcoat for half mourning, which even Mrs Macauley declared was ugly enough "to spean a bairn."

Edith waited impatiently for Reginald's return, but instead of himself, she received a note by the gamekeeper who had attended him, to say that he had been prevailed upon to take a night's quarters, and spend a day or two with his old friend Dunross, at Lochdhu, and that as he was now so far on his way to Dunshiera, he would probably visit it before his return; he therefore desired his servant and horses might join him the following morning, and begged Edith would write him a line to say how Glen-

roy was, &c. All this was quite natural, and yet Edith felt a little mortified that Reginald should voluntarily absent himself from her even for a few days—it might be chiefly on her account indeed, as it was probably a mere excuse to get to Dunshiera with a view to prepare it for her reception, and she was angry with herself for the momentary chagrin she had given way to. She wrote him a few lines in reply, and told him what answer had been returned to Lady Waldegrave's letter, by her father's desire—then added a hope that he would not be long absent, and a request that he would do nothing to Dunshiera on her account.

There was of course a violent storm from Glenroy, when he heard of his nephew's departure; but, upon the whole, he bore it better than could have been expected. The fact was, there was always some one subject that reigned paramount in his mind, and for the present that was the approaching visit of his Lady. It was something to excite him—to confuse him—to keep him in talk, and make him fancy himself in a bustle, as the letter was scarcely gone before he began

to watch for the arrival of his expected guests. But he soon began to weary of expectation and preparation—not even steam itself could have kept pace with his impatience—how much less the tardy movements of even the fleetest of post horses, and the best paid of post-boys, when they depend upon the movements of fine ladies! He did not indeed pretend to say that he anticipated any pleasure from the arrival of his guests—on the contrary, he loudly declared that there ought to be an act of Parliament to prevent women from travelling, and that he only wished his visitors would come that they might go away again.

"I really wish this visit was over," he would exclaim twenty times a day. "Why can't they come and have done with it? do they think I'm going to sit up this way, day after day, waiting for them? Haven't had time?"—to Edith, "What do you call time? I know I have had time to repent that ever I listened to such a madlike proposal. What is it they mean to do after they come here? Are they to take up with Ben-bowie and Molly Macauley? for I can tell them,

they're much mistaken if they think I'm to gallant them about. They're coming to your marriage, are they? But they'll surely have the discretion to write before they come."

Edith assured him they would, as she had required of Lady Waldegrave to let her know when they might expect them.

"And what's the reason Reginald's not come back? What am I to do if he does not come in time to receive them? I really wish, Edith, you would write, and ask what's keeping him, and tell him that he must come directly. It's a pretty situation I'm landed in, with two strange women coming that I know nothing about. What do I know about your Lady Waldegrave? she's nothing to me; and—and my own boy gone!"

At length a sudden and alarming attack of gout in the stomach put a stop to Glenroy's garrulous debatings. All was confusion and dismay—expresses were sent off for medical assistance; and Edith wrote a hurried line to Sir Reginald, informing him of her father's situation. She had heard from him from Dunshiera, where he said he had found so much to do, that the

time of his return was uncertain; but the intelligence of his uncle's danger, she was sure, would bring him instantly to Glenroy; and so it proved; for he lost not a moment in answering the summons; but before either he or the Doctor arrived, the disorder had taken a favourable turn —the gout had resumed its station in the feet. Thus the danger was past for the time, and Glenroy was himself again, and every thing and every body resumed their former station and occupation. Reginald alone seemed restless and uneasy—abrupt in his answers, and unequal in his spirits; but whenever he caught Edith's eye, he instantly rallied, recovered his self-possession, and began to talk to her of Dunshiera, of all he was doing and had to do for her comfort and accommodation, and would then urge the necessity there was for returning there, having numerous work-people waiting his orders. But as the mention of such a purpose always threw Glenroy into an absolute paroxysm, and made him gout all over, he at length agreed to remain where he was, until his uncle's health should be more firmly re-established.

"You surely do not think of receiving Lady Elizabeth now?" said he to Edith, one day when she was expressing her expectation of a letter from Lady Waldegrave.

"No, I scarcely expect them now," said she, "as I wrote to Florinda when papa was taken ill; but if they had set out, of course she could not have received my letter. However, I must hear from her soon, as she will at all events write to apprize me of the day of their arrival, if they are really coming."

"If they should come," said Reginald, in a tone of affected composure, "I shall take advantage of your having such good company, to return to Dunshiera for a few days. Glenroy will probably be quite well by that time, and I am anxious to forward the operations."

"Surely, Reginald, you will not think of leaving us at such a time?" said Edith; "how very unkind—I may almost say rude, it would seem to Lady Elizabeth and Florinda."

"That is a very secondary consideration," replied he; "*seems* signifies little to me in comparison of *should*. I ought to return to Dun-

shiera at that time," he added, endeavouring to retain the same artificial tone. "Nay, more, Edith, why might not you accompany me? Why," he continued, with more visible agitation, "may we not make out our marriage quietly at least, if not privately, now, before these people come?"

"Surely you are not serious, Reginald," cried Edith, in amazement.

"Perfectly so," returned he, quickly.

"I can scarcely believe you," said she; "what can your motive be for so strange a proposal?"

"In the first place," said he, "I feel that I have been long enough exhibited as your lover. In the next, we should avoid the intolerable *éclat* which always attends on these things. And, lastly," he added, with a sort of mocking air, "since your father is going to be reunited to his lady love, 'tis to be supposed he will be too happy to be dependent upon other society, and consequently he could more easily spare us.—What have I said to offend you, Edith?" he continued quickly, as she remained silent, and the tears swelled in her eyes.

"Much," said she, with emotion; "and yet I am sure you did not mean to hurt me, Reginald," she added, tenderly.

"If you are hurt, the fault must be your own, not mine," said Reginald, coldly.

Edith's tears fell, but she made no reply.

Reginald proceeded, in the manner of one who had worked himself up to be angry,—"Since my return, two months ago, I have never ceased importuning you to fulfil your engagement. I have repeatedly besought you to become mine, publicly or privately, I cared not which, but there has always been some frivolous pretext or another for delay; yes, even the colour of your gown has been made the excuse," he cried, with rising vehemence, "as if such weak, superstitious fancies could have swayed you, had you really, truly loved."

"Unkind, unjust that you are!" said Edith, choked with her tears.

"No, the unkindness, the injustice is yours," cried he, still more passionately. "Heaven is witness, that I would have fulfilled our contract long before now. You must do me the justice

to own, that the moment I was assured your affection for me was unchanged, I would have made you mine; you need not blame me, then, if your behaviour leads me at least to doubt the reality of that affection."

Edith was too much overcome to reply. She was accustomed to the querulous fault-finding of her father; and from that and other evils she had been wont to find a refuge in the tenderness of Reginald; but this burst of displeasure was too much for her, and she wept in meek and silent anguish, while he paced the room with the air of one who would rather be still more exasperated than mollified.

At that moment Benbowie entered the room, and was making up to Sir Reginald with an open letter, and beginning something about commissioners of supply, when, hastily brushing past him with an air of reckless hauteur, he quitted the apartment. At the same time, the dressing bell sounded, and Edith retired to her chamber, to compose herself as she best could, for meeting her angry and unreasonable lover at dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

Sir Reginald did not make his appearance in the drawing-room, and it was not till the party were all seated that he entered the dining-room, and then his looks and manner still betokened a mind ill at ease. He was silent and absent, inattentive to the company, and almost rude to poor Mrs Macauley, when she attempted to coax him into a better humour, by her simple and somewhat ill-timed allusions.

Edith felt unequal to bear a part in the conversation. It was all she could do to retain the tears that rose in her eyes, as she now and then encountered Sir Reginald's glance, which, if it did not speak positive displeasure, at least evinced a sort of impatient dissatisfaction. The dessert had been just placed on the table when Boyd entered with a face of importance, and announced

that two travelling carriages had just entered the avenue; and while he yet spoke, the sound of approaching horses and wheels confirmed the fact; in another second, they swept round and drew up.

"Can this be Lady Elizabeth?" exclaimed Edith, rising from the table in some agitation, while Sir Reginald, shading his face with one hand, poured out several successive bumpers of champagne, and drank them off unnoticed in the general confusion that prevailed.

"'Deed and it can be nobody else," cried Mrs Macauley, who had hastened to the window; "there's the two ladies in a barouche, and a well loaded one too, and a gentleman—no, he's only a servant—behind; and there's two very smart-looking ladies' maids, I'm thinking, in the other carriage; and oh what a sight of imperials, and trunks, and boxes! it's a mercy Glenroy does not see them. But I declare I don't think it's Lady Elizabeth, after all, or else she's grown younger and handsomer than ever she was."

"Sir Reginald, will you go and receive Lady Elizabeth?" cried Edith; then struck with the

change in his countenance, she exclaimed, "But you are ill!"

"No—no—nothing," he cried, starting up, his pale cheek and downcast eye suddenly flashing and sparkling with false fire, while the sweetest and most melodious of voices was now heard in the hall, as if speaking to her dog, and presently Lady Waldegrave was announced. Edith flew to the door to receive her, but she started in surprise at the beauty, the surpassing beauty and brilliancy of the figure that met her view, and gracefully opened her arms to receive her embrace.

For some moments, Edith's emotion rendered her unconscious of every thing but that her once fondly-loved Florinda was restored to her. But, at the same time, the remembrance of her lost brother mingled with the tide of feeling, and rendered her unable to articulate the common expressions of welcome.

"You are very kind, dear Edith," said Lady Waldegrave, as she raised her head and shook back the beautiful ringlets which shaded her face. "I scarcely deserve to be so well recei-

ved, considering how I have broken in upon your family party. I am afraid I have disturbed you."

"O! do not think of apologies at such a time," said Edith, again tenderly embracing her, and gazing with looks of fond admiration through her tears. "Dearest Florinda! how welcome you are to Glenroy!"

"I assure you I cannot be more welcome than I am delighted to return," replied Lady Waldegrave, with an earnestness of manner which left no doubt of her sincerity.

Edith did not immediately answer, for her attention was attracted to Sir Reginald, who was standing with his back to them, talking and laughing strangely loud with the other lady, when Lady Waldegrave called to her,—

"Madame Latour, allow me to present you to Miss Malcolm." Then observing Edith's look of surprise, she exclaimed,—"Ah! did I forget to mention Madame Latour to you? She was my governess, and is now my friend—she is a very charming, accomplished person, and excels in speaking broken English."

Madame Latour, thus called upon, saluted Edith with all the ease and grace of her country, while Sir Reginald, for the first time recognizing Lady Waldegrave, made a slight constrained bow, and then turned abruptly away. Edith was shocked at the rudeness of such a reception. Lady Waldegrave blushed, and said in a low voice, but sufficiently loud for him to overhear,—

"I scarcely expected to find Sir Reginald Malcolm at Glenroy."

Such avowed marks of hostility at the very outset, and from persons of such high breeding and refinement, struck Edith with surprise and consternation. She knew not what to reply, and in some confusion said,—"I—we—expected to see Lady Elizabeth; and I hope nothing has occurred"——

"O! mamma will be here," said Lady Waldegrave; "but her carriage is heavier than mine, and I flatter myself," added she, with sweetness, "my impatience was also greater than even hers, to reach Glenroy and its loved ones," gently pressing Edith's hand as she spoke. "But I am really shocked at having deranged your little

party," as Mrs Macauley and Benbowie remained in all the awkwardness of suspense, not knowing whether to sit or stand.

"I daresay your ladyship will not remember me," said Mrs Macauley, on coming forward.

"My dear Mrs Macauley," said Lady Waldegrave, affectionately embracing her—"how can you suppose I ever could forget you? Indeed, I never do forget those I love," she said, with much earnestness. "And you used to be so kind to me when I was a little, naughty, mischievous creature!"

"'Deed, then, my lady, and you was that," replied the simple Macky; "but I'm sure one need only look at you to see that you are not that now."

Lady Waldegrave laughed, and there was melody even in her laugh. "And, Benbowie, I hope I see you well?" extending the tip of her finger to him. "But where is Glenroy?" looking round, as she missed him for the first time. Edith explained that he was confined to his own apartment with a fit of the gout.

"How sorry I am!" said Lady Waldegrave,

in a tone beautifully modulated to pity; then, in a moment, changing it to one of delight, she exclaimed, "Come, dear Fido!" as Sir Reginald's dog entered the room, and flew to her with demonstrations of joy.

"How kindly Fido welcomes me," said she, as she fondled it. "He has not forgot me—dear Fido!" she repeated, as she continued to load it with caresses, unmindful of the jealousy testified by her own favourite.

Sir Reginald made no reply, but, with a heightened colour, called the dog to himself, and, striking it, sternly bade it be quiet. Edith was still more confounded by Reginald's behaviour; that he who was so uniformly polite and well-bred, should behave with rudeness to any woman, but more especially to one so lovely and fascinating, was quite incomprehensible. His dog, too, of which he had hitherto evinced a care and tenderness that seemed almost ridiculous, to lift his hand against it, for no other reason as it seemed, than because it had caressed Lady Waldegrave! Surely this was carrying antipathy to its utmost bounds! Rousing herself from these

reflections, however, she said, "I need scarcely ask if you have dined; I can only apologize for the uncomfortable meal I fear you will now have."

"Were I to answer you myself, I should say I had dined," replied Lady Waldegrave. "As I really don't mind dinner so much as many people do, and we had some not *very* bad mutton chops at the last stage—only they did taste a little of peats and whisky," she added, laughing. "But if you ask Madame Latour, she will tell you she has not dined since she left London."

"Get dinner immediately for Lady—for Madame Latour," cried Sir Reginald, hastily, to a servant who happened to be in the room; then colouring at his own impetuosity, he turned to Edith and said, "I beg pardon, Miss Malcolm, for presuming to anticipate your orders,—it is time Glenroy should resume his place, since I am already usurping his authority."

"O no," said Edith, gently, "papa would be pleased to see you performing the duties of his proxy, by showing hospitality (which, you know,

is all we poor Highlanders have to show) to those kind friends who have come so far to see us."

"I think I might be prevailed upon to eat some of these Alpine strawberries," said Lady Waldegrave, as she seated herself at table. A slight bend of the head was the only reply Reginald vouchsafed as he helped the strawberries, without once looking towards his beautiful guest.

Glenroy's bell had been sounding vehemently at intervals for some time, and a message now came, desiring to see Sir Reginald, or Miss Malcolm, directly.

Sir Reginald instantly started up as if glad of the summons, and merely saying to Edith, "I will save you the trouble," hastily quitted the room.

"How extremement Saar Ragenall est changé," exclaimed Madame Latour, addressing her friend; "ce ne que l'ombre de lui-même! how he is pâle et morne, what you call painseeve. Miss Maulcomb, you most be *sensible* of an extraordinaire changement of Saar Ragenall?"

Edith's attention had been so engrossed by

Florinda, that she had little to bestow upon Madame Latour; but, thus called upon, she considered her more attentively, and the impression made, was not of a pleasing kind. Madame Latour, though rather past her prime, was still a showy, handsome brunette, with quick black eyes, good white teeth, a well got up complexion, and an air of the most thorough self-possession.

"Sir Reginald has not been very well of late," said Edith, casting down her eyes to avoid the piercing stare which accompanied the interrogation.

"Ah! I am much inquiet for him," resumed Madame, with a shake of the head, "he was si joli, si charmant, vat you call pleesante—Ladi Waldegrave, n'êtes vous pas frappé—strock with de change?"

"I have scarcely yet had time to observe Sir Reginald's looks," replied Lady Waldegrave, carelessly, "but I thought you and he seemed very merry together."

"O, we talk—nous rions—laaffe for one moment, mais donc il est si maigre—vat you call sin."

Meanwhile a repast from the *débris* of the dinner had been quickly got up at the other end of the room, and no sooner was it arranged than Madame Latour started up with great alacrity, and repaired to it. Lady Waldegrave declined partaking of it, saying, she preferred dining at the dessert. Benbowie, whose appetite was of a most hospitable nature, instinctively stalked away, and took his place by her, as if intending to do the honours of the banquet, which indeed he did, if devouring every thing within his reach was deemed an exemplary mark of hospitality.

" Cette grosse est excellente, excellente," said Madame Latour, after she had helped herself to the back and breast of a moorfowl, leaving the legs and pinions for Benbowie, who, like panting Time, toiled after her in vain. She flew like a butterfly or bee, from dish to dish, extracting the very heart and soul from each as she skimmed along, while at the same time she kept calling for every species of sauce and condiment that ever had been heard of, which she contrived to mix with the most admirable dexterity.

"Madame Latour est une peu gourmande," said Lady Waldegrave, addressing Edith, "but otherwise she is the best creature in the world; so perfectly good hearted, and so devoted to me. I am sure you will like her."

Edith could not violate sincerity so far as to say she thought she should, for she already felt what she rarely did, a strong prepossession against this "best creature in the world;" so she changed the subject by making a sort of apology for Reginald's protracted absence—"But papa is so fond of him," she said, "that he finds it very difficult to get away from him." Then with an air of hesitation, she added, "Sir Reginald and you met abroad, I believe?"

"Yes, we met occasionally," replied her ladyship, slightly colouring—"What very pretty china this is—Dresden, I am sure," examining her plate with great attention; "after all, there is nothing so pretty as flowers upon china."

Edith assented, and then timidly added, "Madame Latour seems much struck with the change in Reginald's appearance?"

"He does look rather *triste*," said Lady Walde-

grave, as she drew another plate towards her; "what a charming group—these carnations are perfect!"

"The loss of my dear brother," said Edith, with emotion, "has affected Reginald very deeply."

"Ah, true," replied Lady Waldegrave, putting on a very soft melancholy look.

"That, and the remains of malaria which he had at Rome, will account to you for the present depressed state of his spirits."

"Oh, perfectly," said Lady Waldegrave, biting her lip as if to repress a smile which lurked round her beautiful mouth, and shone in her large blue eyes.

Madame Latour's devotion meanwhile had been dedicated exclusively to her dinner, and having done due honour to it, she was now on her way to the dessert, when Lady Waldegrave rose, saying, "Pray, dear Edith, let us go to the drawing-room; the smell of two dinners is rather too much for those who have not partaken of either." Putting her arm within Edith's, she then gracefully sauntered out of the room, stopping

occasionally to remark upon some of the pictures, which she did in the style of one who was perfect mistress of the theory of painting. They were soon followed by the rest of the party, with the exception of Sir Reginald.

An air of languid discontent was now insensibly stealing over Lady Waldegrave, in spite of Madame Latour's efforts to amuse by her broken English, when again the sound of wheels was heard. Presently a heavy-laden travelling coach drew up, from the windows of which dogs' heads were seen protruding in all directions.

"There comes mamma and her tiresome dogs!" exclaimed Lady Waldegrave, in a tone of chagrin.

At that moment the hall resounded with the sharp shrill treble of three lap-dogs, which was quickly accompanied by a deep running bass from the various dogs of the household, and then caught up by the imprisoned yells of the more remote inmates of the kennel, "in notes by distance made more sweet."

"Ah, I am happy to see Reginald has gone to receive Lady Elizabeth," said Edith, as his voice was heard in the hall giving orders to the

servants; and then flying down the steps, he presented his arm to Lady Elizabeth, as she alighted, and appeared to welcome her with the semblance of the greatest cordiality.

"How differently he met Lady Waldegrave!" thought Edith, then hastened forward to receive her stepmother.

CHAPTER XII.

Lady Elizabeth was now a thin, weak, cross, old-looking woman, dressed in the extreme of youthfulness, with an unnatural profusion of flaxen ringlets dangling round withered, hollow, rouged cheeks. She but just touched Edith's hand, and laid her face to hers, then passed on to her daughter, and putting her arms round her, kissed her with a sort of hysterical emphasis; then, in a peevish, querulous tone, exclaimed,

"You may thank heaven, child, you see me safe and tolerably well! What a frightful road for me to travel! How could you leave me, my love? I have been excessively alarmed—those dreadful precipices, and that shocking water!"

"Quite charming, mamma," said Lady Waldegrave. "It seemed as if Scott's beautiful description of the Trosachs had started into life;" and

in a low tone, but with perfect modulation of voice and manner, she repeated some of those glowing lines.

"Nonsense, my dear," exclaimed Lady Elizabeth; "it is a frightful, a *dangerous* road, and it was very improper of you, my love, to leave my carriage so far behind."

"I beg pardon, mamma; but it did not appear to me there was the slightest danger," said her daughter.

"My dear love, don't say so," cried her ladyship, impatiently; "I never in my life travelled so dangerous a road. If I had had the slightest recollection of it, I never should have attempted it, even to gratify you, my sweetest—those tremendous rocks on one hand, and the lake on the other—shocking! I had forgot it entirely, else I certainly never should have dreamt of such a thing as coming here."

"Don't you feel fatigued, mamma?" enquired Lady Waldegrave.

"Certainly, my love, excessively fatigued, and my nerves shaken beyond expression; and those dear dogs! Bijou was really quite ill. I'm

surprised Glenroy can suffer such a road—it ought not to be permitted. If I had been travelling in the dark, or if my horses had taken fright—or a thousand things might have happened."

"Don't you think mamma *must* be much fatigued, Dr Price?" said Lady Waldegrave, turning to a sickly-looking, elderly man, in a black wig, green surtout, white trowsers, pale hands, and a ring.

"Unquestionably," replied the doctor, in a slow, hesitating manner; "her ladyship has been much agitated, and consequently must be considerably exhausted. If her ladyship is to dine now, I would recommend half an hour's repose after dinner, either upon a couch or easy chair, whichever she gives the preference to; or if there is to be any delay in the preparing of her ladyship's repast, then I would advise the rest, to be taken previous to partaking of it."

Edith took the hint, and ringing the bell, ordered a third dinner to be prepared as soon as possible for her very considerate guests. Then, having procured some refreshments in the mean-

time, she offered to conduct Lady Elizabeth to her apartment. With a languid air she accepted Edith's arm, but as she was leaving the room, turned round and called—

"Florinda, my darling, you must come too.—And, Dr Price, you will give Rosalie her directions about the drops, and do see that the dogs get their dinners, for they are almost famished, poor loves.—Do, Florinda, love, come with me. I assure you I have been excessively alarmed; it is all your doing, my dear—that road was really quite frightful—I shall never forget my alarm."

Here Lady Waldegrave swept her fingers over a harp which stood near, and thus contrived to evade the proposal.

Lady Elizabeth, after another ineffectual attempt to attract her daughter's attention, suffered Edith to lead her from the room; but it was with difficulty she managed to shuffle along, in shoes evidently much too small for her feet.

"Lady Waldegrave is a charming creature, is she not?" said she, stopping in the middle of the hall, and leaning her whole weight on Edith.

"Oh, beautiful!" exclaimed Edith; "I could not have imagined any thing so faultless, and at the same time so captivating."

"Ah! very true—her manners are very good. I have bestowed great pains upon her; she is, perhaps, if any thing—but it is scarcely perceptible—a single degree too much *embonpoint;* at least she *may* be, unless she is upon her guard. I was a perfect whipping-post at her age; and even now I don't think I am larger than she is. It is a great matter to preserve the figure; nothing makes people look so soon old, as allowing themselves to grow fat, and get out of shape. Florinda's figure, to be sure, is perfection,—rather, if any thing, too tall perhaps; she is taller than I am, otherwise, as Monsieur Perpignan said, we might very well pass for twins—a pretty thought, was it not?"

Edith could scarcely restrain a smile as she looked at the old wrinkled scarecrow, who sought to assimilate herself with her young and blooming daughter.

Her ladyship went on—"She has been prodigiously admired and *recherché* wherever we went;

but I don't intend that she should marry yet, for in fact, Lady Waldegrave has nothing to gain by marriage—like myself, she may lose, but she can scarcely better herself; it is very well for *des filles sans dots* to be eager about a settlement, but with my daughter's rank, beauty, fashion, and fortune, what is she to look for? And if she were to marry now, she would have a daughter at her heels while she herself was quite a young woman. I married a great deal too soon, and you see the consequence! I may be a grandmother in the very prime of life! Shocking and foolish!"

They had now reached the door of her ladyship's apartment, and, upon entering the dressing room, the floor was covered with imperials, wells, trunks, boxes, *sacs de nuit*, and packages of every description, which her maid and footman were busily employed in putting to rights.

"Do, Rosalie, contrive to get my things unpacked and arranged as quickly as possible," cried Lady Elizabeth, impatiently, and looking round the room; "Pray ask the housekeeper to let me have a *chaise longue*, I rather prefer it to a

sofa; and bring up my dog-baskets and cushions; let me have a larger table, and have that commode carried away. I shall not have room to turn about here." Then addressing her footman, "And, Rousseau, look to my guitar, and have it brought here with my music books and *porte-feuille*; I brought my guitar and Rossini's last opera, as I thought it would amuse Glenroy to have a little good music; but I am sorry to hear from Sir Reginald, that he is so unwell. I shall make a point of Dr Price seeing him; he is the best creature in the world; dresses so well; he is so skilful and gentlemanly, and is never out of the way. I have the most perfect confidence in him. It is very unfortunate for him, poor man, that he has such wretched health himself. Had it been otherwise indeed, he must have been devoted to the public, and I should not have had the good fortune to attach him to my establishment; and I am in hopes change of scene, and travelling, may do him good.—How very tedious you are, Rosalie—do get my things ready, that I may begin to dress."

"I beg pardon," said Edith; "but I think

Dr. Price recommended your taking a little rest before dinner; and as we are quite a family party, I hope you won't add to your fatigue by dressing."

"O, Dr Price does not at all understand that sort of thing," replied her ladyship; "he is excellent in his way, but—I shall put on a black gown to-day, Rosalie—Florinda and I agreed to wear black at first, as a sort of proper compliment, you know," glancing at Edith's deep mourning—"otherwise I never do wear black, it is so unpleasant, and puts such shocking thoughts in one's head; but we won't talk of it—it makes me quite ill to think of such things!" Then, as Rosalie announced that her ladyship's *toilette* was ready, she gently pressed the tip of Edith's fingers, and said, "Now, my dear, I shall join you in half an hour." And Edith gladly availed herself of the hint to withdraw. Wearied and sickened at the frivolity, heartlessness, and egotism, already so fully developed in her stepmother's conversation, Edith bitterly repented having been accessory to bringing her to the house.

"Reginald was right," thought she; "papa will never be able to bear this." And she trembled to think of the shock that would ensue when two such antipodes came in contact.

It was therefore with fear she returned into her father's presence, whom she found already apprised of the extent of the party, Benbowie having twice counted them over to him on his fingers, and thus demonstrated to him that there was an individual to each, thumbs included. Edith had, of course, to bear a storm of reproach and invective for having brought such a crew to the house, interspersed with threats of turning the Doctor and Frenchwoman, with their attendants, out of it; and of not seeing the face of one of them as long as they staid.

CHAPTER XIII.

In the drawing-room Edith found only Lady Waldegrave and her friend. The former was reclining languidly on a sofa, and Madame Latour was seated on a low stool by her, discoursing with much energy in her native language.

" Soyez sure qu'il est passionnément amoureux," exclaimed she vehemently, as Edith entered; then, on perceiving her, she called, " venez ici, Mlle. Malcomb—dites moi, croyez vous qu'il soit possible d'aimer cette dame? n'est elle pas affreuse—wat you call oglie?" And making a grimace, she put her hands before her eyes.

Lady Waldegrave slightly blushed, and smiled as, half rising from her reclining attitude, she extended her hand to Edith, and said, " You have

been sadly bored, I fear, dear Edith; but we must not allow mamma to monopolize you thus."

There was something so sweet and fascinating in Lady Waldegrave's every tone, and look, and movement, that Edith, won by the charm, seated herself by her, and soon forgot her momentary dissatisfaction with Lady Elizabeth and Madame Latour.

"How vivid my remembrance is of you," said she coaxingly to Edith; "and how like a dream it seems, to find myself again here, where every thing awakens some childish recollection; most of them to my own shame, indeed, when I think what a little saucy chit I was. And, by the by, how very unkind and ungrateful you must have thought me, in never having written to you. But, indeed, you cannot conceive how much I have been under the control of guardians and governesses for the last twelve years.—Thank Heaven, I am now pretty much emancipated from bondage; but, I do assure you, it is a very tiresome thing to be trained up to be a person of consequence; and I often thought with envy of the delightful liberty you enjoyed of ram-

bling amongst your Highland hills and forests with the boys, while I was condemned to lessons from morning till night. My only relaxation was a walk in the Park with my governesses, or a still more tiresome drive with mamma. But you have forgiven me, dearest Edith, have you not?" and she put her arm round Edith's neck, and laid her head on her shoulder, and looked in her face with the most winning expression.

"I have nothing to forgive—I am sure I never shall have any thing to forgive you," said Edith, with fond affection.

"Non, non, c'est un ange, un parfait ange!" exclaimed Madame Latour, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. "Mais, Ladi Waldegrave, ne faites vous pas toilette ce soir?" enquired she, as she rose from the lowly seat, and glanced at herself in an opposite mirror.

"No, I am too lazy; will you excuse me, Edith, if I remain *en déshabillé*?"

"Ah, c'est le privilege de la jeunesse et de la beauté, de se passer d'ornemens; mais lorsqu'on est un peu passée, ma belle,"—Madame sighed affectedly. "Ainsi je vais sonner pour ma

femme de chambre." And to Edith's great relief, Madame Latour retired to her toilette.

"*Apropos* of *dress*," said Lady Waldegrave, "I hope you admire cameos, Edith, because I have brought you some, and I shall be sorry if you don't happen to like them—I am very impatient to show them to you, so I shall send for them now;" and, in spite of Edith's remonstrances, she rang the bell for her maid, and in a few minutes the box was brought, and an exquisite set of cameos, of the most perfect design and execution, were presented to Edith, whose native good taste enabled her at once to appreciate the beauty and value of the gift.

"How my heart overflows with affection and kind wishes!" said Lady Waldegrave. "I now feel so forcibly the truth of that beautiful sentiment of Madame de Stael's, 'Il y a en nous un superflu d'ame, qu'il est doux de consacrer à ce qui est beau, quand ce qui est bien, est accompli.' Not that I can flatter myself with having accomplished the good," added she, with a smile, "*le beau* is so much more to my taste than *le bien*."

"If to give pleasure is to do good, you have

succeeded in one instance," said Edith, as she continued admiring the various beauties of the classic gems; "but I am afraid there is too much of *le beau* here, to admit of much of *le bien*."

Lady Waldegrave was silent for a few minutes, then, with a sigh, said, "Whether I shall ever do good is doubtful, but it is certain that I have already been the cause of much mischief. I cannot tell you how much I lament the unfortunate misunderstanding that took place between Lady Elizabeth and Glenroy. It grieves me more than I can express. to think that I should have been the cause, the unintentional one indeed, of their separation !"

"Do not distress yourself on that account, dear Florinda," said Edith, tenderly, "for indeed Lady Elizabeth and papa seem so different, I do not think they ever could have lived happily together."

"You are very kind and considerate to say so," replied Lady Waldegrave, pressing her hand, "but we cannot tell what habit might have done. I must therefore always look upon

myself as the cause of this, I fear, irreparable mischief."

"You blame yourself unjustly," said Edith, earnestly. "Young as I was at the time, from what I remember, I should suppose you had only been one of many causes of disagreement."

"Perhaps so; but still I feel as a guilty thing. Oh, how glad I should be if I could see them fairly reconciled!"

"To tell you the truth, I have often, especially of late, felt the same wish," said Edith, with a slight degree of confusion; "but now I see—I fear—I do not think it will be practicable, they are so different."

"Of that you must be a better judge than I," replied Lady Waldegrave, "as my impression of Glenroy is probably very imperfect. I only remember him a very tall, fine-looking man, with a loud voice, and an authoritative manner, of which I was a little afraid; but perhaps circumstances may have softened these."

Edith shook her head. "Papa is very kind-hearted and affectionate," said she, "but he likes

to have his own way, and Lady Elizabeth has, of course, been so long independent of control"——

"Ah, true," interrupted Lady Waldegrave "Mamma is not easily managed, and she is excessively fond of what is called a gay life, and therefore, I fear, we must be satisfied with a mere temporary reconciliation, without attempting a more solid union. It is unfortunate, for when I marry, mamma would be more respectable living with her husband than she will be by herself; and when *you* marry, which, of course, you will also do—now don't blush, Edith, love—I am not going to talk of lovers; I shall find out in good time whether you have any *affaires du cœur*, so pray don't make me your confidante—'tis the office in the world I have the greatest dread of."

Edith laughed and promised, and the conversation was ended by the entrance of Sir Reginald and Dr Price, looking like two people whom chance, not choice, had thrown together.

Sir Reginald drew near, as if about to address Lady Waldegrave, then stopped and turned to the table where the cameos were, and taking

up one of the bracelets, commended the beauty of it.

"They are indeed perfect," said Edith; "each cameo is a picture in itself, and I should have thought myself rich with any one of them; but Lady Waldegrave insists upon my accepting the whole set."

Sir Reginald said nothing, but hastily put down the bracelet, and, joining Dr Price at one of the windows, immediately began to talk politics with him. Edith coloured with shame at this proof of her lover's rudeness and dislike to Lady Waldegrave. "And yet," she thought, "how is it possible to hate any thing so beautiful and captivating? What can be the cause of this coldness which he seems to feel for every thing connected with a creature so lovely and engaging?"

"How did you like my picture, Edith?" enquired Lady Waldegrave. "Should you have known me by it?"

Edith looked at her with the air of one who is at a loss to comprehend the meaning of a question.

"Your picture?" replied she; "I never saw

any picture of you, except the little daub done by Mrs Macauley, which, bad as it is, has always hung in my dressing-room. You don't mean that?"

"No—the picture I sent you from Florence. Whom did I send it by?" as if trying to recollect. "I certainly did send it—How provoking that I should not be able to tell by whom! There were a number of English there; but perhaps Sir Reginald Malcolm might, if he chose, assist my memory."

Sir Reginald took no notice, but continued talking with much energy with Dr Price on the affairs of Europe. Edith called to him—"Sir Reginald!—Sir Reginald, I wish you would come and assist Lady Waldegrave and me in our attempts to recover a picture she gave in charge to some one at Florence for me, but which I have never received."

"Even if I guessed at the offender," said Sir Reginald, in a low voice, "Lady Waldegrave surely would not have the cruelty to have his name exposed to the indignation which his conduct merits."

Reginald was behind Edith, who did not see his face as he spoke; but he was opposite to Lady Waldegrave, who blushed deeply, while something like a smile was upon her lip.

"Is it Florinda or I, whose indignation you think would be so excessive?" asked Edith.

"Both," he replied, as he turned quickly and rejoined Dr Price.

"It must be from mere carelessness that it has not been delivered," said Lady Waldegrave; "but if it does not appear soon, you or I must draw up an advertisement for it, Edith. Seriously, it must be recovered, as a lock of my hair accompanied it, and it is not every one I should choose to be in possession of such things, valueless as they may be to the retainer."

Sir Reginald and Dr Price were busily engaged looking at an atlas; and the two friends continued to converse together, till Lady Elizabeth made her appearance, dressed like fifteen for a first ball.

"My dear Florinda!" she exclaimed, "what do I see? not yet dressed? How very uncomfortable it makes me to see any body in a morn-

ing gown in the evening—it is so very trying, an angel could not stand such a test. I do assure you, my dear, you look very ill."

"Thank you, mamma," said Lady Waldegrave, coolly; and, taking up a footstool cover, with Mrs Macauley's needle still sticking in it, she began to work with an air of unconcern.

"Too ridiculous!" cried Lady Elizabeth, with a shrug of her little bare shoulders; "you only want a brass thimble to make you quite complete, Lady Waldegrave. Why should you wish to look like a dowdy, my love?" Then, in a whisper to Edith, "She is a beautiful creature, to be sure! what a profile! what a throat! what hands! Madame d'Aumont used to say, she should have known her to be my daughter any where from the hands alone—hands and feet, you know, are the great criterions of birth. Heavens, how she was admired at Paris! She is a *little* spoilt, perhaps, by the sensation she caused."

Here her ladyship's dinner was announced, and, as Edith rose to attend her, Lady Waldegrave exclaimed, "Poor dear Edith! this is really

too much, to do the honours of three dinners in one day. How you must hate us all! Cannot good Mrs Macauley relieve you from this duty? I am sure mamma will excuse you."

"Mrs Macauley and Benbowie are always with papa in the evening," said Edith; "but, at any rate, Sir Reginald and I would wish to welcome Lady Elizabeth to Glenroy ourselves, and as you did not partake of the first dinner, perhaps you will join our party."

"No dinner! My dear child," cried Lady Elizabeth, "what do I hear? How very foolish. How could Madame Latour suffer such a thing? No wonder you look pale—quite *abattue*. Come, my love, you shall dine with me: my dinner, you know, is a mere make-believe. Sir Reginald, you will take charge of Lady Waldegrave" —putting her own arm within Edith's. Sir Reginald hastily recoiled at the proposal; then quickly recovering himself, was advancing, when Lady Waldegrave said, with an air of coldness, "Excuse me, mamma—I have already dined, and I prefer remaining here."

"But, my dear love, you will be alone—

some one must stay with you. Not you," pressing Edith's arm. "I have much to say to you. Perhaps Dr Price." But the doctor looked very glum at the proposal; and luckily at that moment Madame Latour appeared, which settled the point, and the party proceeded to the dining-room, leaving the two friends together. "I wish particularly to talk to you, my dear," said her ladyship, in a low voice, to Edith, as she walked mincingly along. "There are many things very interesting to both of us I have on my mind at present. By the by, my dear, your hair is not dressed quite *à-la-mode*. It becomes you very well, but still it is too simple for the present style—the simple is now quite exploded; and, indeed, I'm not sure that I like simplicity, though it does well enough now and then, by way of a little variety. Florinda, for instance, may simple now and then for a whim, but *she* may do any thing she chooses. You have heard these pretty lines somebody made upon her?

'Tender or free, in smiles or sadness drest,
The reigning humour ever suits her best.'"

Then, as she seated herself at table, she repeated, " Tender and free," &c. " Sir Reginald, do you remember who it was made these lines upon my daughter?"

" I beg pardon," said Sir Reginald; " but I believe the lines are to be found in Partenopex de Blois."

" Excuse me, Sir Reginald," replied the lady, with an air of displeasure; " but the lines were made upon Lady Waldegrave, as any one may perceive at once; and, as Mr Ellenton very well remarked to me, they were a perfect picture of her. Mr Ellenton repeats verses better than any body I know.—This soup is very good—it is very good,"—sending away her plate after taking two spoonfuls. " I know you don't recommend salmon to me, Dr Price, but that looks so particularly well, I will just taste it." Then, having taken a little of it, it was also sent off. " Pray, send me a pâté, Dr Price—ah, chicken pâté, very well seasoned, though?"—putting down the knife and fork, after the first mouthful. " Yes, I will try the *fricandeau*," and so on with game, tarts, jellies, and dessert, in a manner

enough to have raised the ghost of Lycurgus, or Dr Gregory. No sooner had she finished, than, quickly rising, she again linked herself to Edith. "Now, let us go to the library, or the saloon, or any where to be quiet, as I wish to have a little tête-à-tête with you, my dear. I have so much to say to you; and, *apropos*, do you know, I think Sir Reginald Malcolm excessively disagreeable? How very rude, to contradict me about these lines! I know he is your cousin—but nobody minds cousins. To tell you the truth, I never did like him—as a boy, you know, he was shocking; he had very nearly killed my daughter, as you may remember; he had beat her in the most frightful manner; in fact, had almost actually strangled her. I certainly never would have forgiven it; and I did not approve of Florinda's having admitted him to her acquaintance. It began when she was absent from me, with her aunt, Lady Escott, at Naples, else I never would have permitted it."

"Lady Waldegrave and Sir Reginald do not appear to be very good friends yet," said Edith, in some embarrassment.

"Why, no—I am not sure—he certainly was admired; and he *is* rather handsome; don't you think so? But Florinda, though the sweetest creature in the world, is a little capricious—that between ourselves, though—and I blame Madame Latour entirely for whatever faults my daughter may have. I don't quite like Madame Latour—she affects a style of dress which is absurd, and wears her petticoats so *very* short, to show her foot—which, by the by—is *not* well shaped. Such display is very bad taste, and quite defeats the object," glancing at herself in a mirror with great complacency. "To tell you a secret, my dear—but this is quite in confidence—I half suspect her of a design upon Sir Reginald. It is rather ridiculous, to be sure, for Madame Latour is by no means a young *looking* woman—in fact, that is one great advantage we blondes have over brunettes in general, we retain a youthful appearance much longer. However, it is certain he paid her great attention at Florence, and was much more in my house than I thought either proper or agreeable."

Reginald an admirer of Madame Latour!

Edith could not believe her ears; and yet with what vivacity he had met her! How she sickened at the thought—how degrading to Sir Reginald, to herself, to harbour it for a single moment! While these thoughts passed through her mind, Lady Elizabeth went on.

"Madame Latour is of a good family, and so was her husband—to be sure she is older than Sir Reginald; but that is nothing—a few years one way or other makes little difference, and he certainly *did* admire her, and paid her great attention; but, however, it may have been merely *pour passer le temps.*"

Could Reginald, her own betrothed, have condescended to flirt, *pour passer le temps*, with a Madame Latour? Oh, how Edith's pure and devoted heart rose at the suggestion!

"I should not be sorry to see Madame Latour well disposed of," continued her ladyship; "she is rather *de trop* now; indeed I had no intention of keeping her so long, for in fact I merely engaged her for a year, as a sort of something between a governess and a companion for Florinda; you understand the sort of person. My

own health was wretched at that time; but upon the whole she is objectionable—she talks so much, and is so extremely gross in her eating, quite shocking, and dresses with so much pretension—and, in short, she is become so unpleasant, that I do assure you I shall not be sorry to lose her; but of course this is all a secret, and I don't wish to take any notice of it either to Florinda or Sir Reginald, just at present; but we shall see how they go on. Did you ever see any thing so excessively *recherché* as her style of dress?"

In this manner she continued to babble on for about an hour, resisting all Edith's attempts to return to the drawing-room, from whence issued the most delightful sounds of music.

"Yes, Florinda does play and sing very well," said she, in answer to Edith's remark; "in fact, she would not have been my daughter had she not been possessed of all the requisites for a good musician; but I think she has done enough now; I don't approve of her singing too long at a time. Come, my dear, we shall return to the drawing-room. I have much to say to you, but we shall

take another time, when we can have a little quiet talk together."

On entering the drawing-room, they found Lady Waldegrave seated at the harp, pouring forth the full tide of song in strains of perfect melody. Her voice was rich, clear, and flexible, and she both played and sung with much taste and execution.

"Florinda possesses every personal requisite for the harp," whispered Edith's tormentor, as she still leant upon her, "quite a classic bust, the most perfect hands and arms, and the prettiest foot in the world. How shocking to see women pawing the harp with great, ill-shaped hands, or awkwardly showing their long waists and clumsy feet! Such things ought not to be permitted; I have been obliged to leave off playing the harp since my health became delicate, it requires more muscular exertion than Dr Price thinks good for me; but you shall hear me on the guitar."

Edith's attention was directed to Reginald, who sat apart at a table, with an open book spread before him, his head resting on his hand, which

shaded his eyes. Madame Latour sat by him working a purse, which was every now and then suspended, while she held up her hands, threw up her eyes, and sighed in ecstasy at particular passages in the song. Dr Price was reading the newspapers. Mrs Macauley was sitting with her hands on her lap, listening to what she did not understand.

Scarcely was the song ended, when Lady Elizabeth exclaimed impatiently, " Now, my dearest, you have done quite enough for to-night— I must not suffer you to over-exert yourself; I will relieve you now.—Dr Price, pray ring the bell for my guitar."

" You forget how late it is, mamma," said her daughter, with an air of chagrin, " and that we are all beginning to get tired, even of music."

" Nonsense, my love, 'tis not at all late—my fatigue is quite gone off. I feel as if I could even take a turn in a waltz," looking towards Sir Reginald, who now fixed his eyes attentively on his book. " Of course you waltz, Miss Malcolm? come, let us take a round together."

" Your ladyship must excuse me; my spirits

are not equal to dancing," said Edith; and her eyes filled with tears as she thought, "This is the boasted sympathy I was led to expect in our sorrow!"

"'Deed, and I think it would not be decent to be dancing," said Mrs Macauley, in a low voice to Madame Latour, "considering the misfortunes of the family, and Glenroy himself laid up in his bed, honest man!"

Sir Reginald saw that Edith was hurt. Quitting Madame Latour, he hastily advanced towards her, and taking her hand, drew it within his arm, while he led her to an open window—"You are ill—fatigued, I fear, dear Edith," said he, in a tone of compassion. At that moment Lady Waldegrave rose, and called to her, "Excuse me, Miss Malcolm, but I must wish you good night;" she was then retiring, attended by her friend, when Lady Elizabeth, folding her in her arms, kissed her forehead, "Good night, my sweetest, you do look *abattue;* but a morning-gown in the evening is too trying for an angel—good night, my charmer; and here comes

my guitar.—Miss Malcolm, you will return when you have seen Florinda to her apartment, and we shall have a little soft music before supper."

Sir Reginald opened the door for the ladies to withdraw, and as Lady Waldegrave passed, he made her a profound bow, which she noticed with a slight and constrained bend of the head. Madame Latour whispered a few words to him in Italian, then laughed gaily, and the door was closed. "Quelle grâce dans son salut! vat you call bow," said she, addressing Lady Waldegrave; then turning to Edith, "Ah, Meess Malcomb, votre frère est charmant! il a fait tourner la tête à toutes les femmes d'Italie."

"Sir Reginald is not my brother," said Edith, with a blush.

"Saar Reginaal n'est pas votre frère, your broder?" exclaimed Madame, in well-feigned astonishment; "Vraiment je n'en ai pas douté, ven I do see ses aimables petites attentions pour vous;—mais que je suis étourdie! I do remember dat he talk of sometime his bonne petite cousine Ecossaise."

Edith's cheeks glowed, and her heart rose at this insolence.

"Que je suis bête to meestak," continued Madame, as if in despair; "vous me pardonnerez, ma chère Meess Malcomb?"

"Edith, I am sure, looks too good to resent any thing," said Lady Waldegrave, suddenly restored to good spirits, "much less so harmless a meestak," laughing, as she mimicked Madame's pronunciation; "but your patience is heavily taxed, dear Edith—Mamma has such an inveterate habit of sitting up half the night, that it is quite distressing to think of your having to keep her company."

"How extraamement Ladi Elizabeth injure her estomac by so frequent eating," said Madame Latour, in a tone of virtuous indignation; "et il est si malsain de souper! vat you call disealthy; den she will expose ses pauvres soldiers, ses épaules, and they die of de rheumatisme."

Edith embraced Lady Waldegrave, and, coldly saluting Madame Latour, returned to the drawing-room, where she had to sit for an hour

listening to insipid madrigals and rondos, after which her ladyship, having pecked like a sparrow at every thing that was at table, at length retired, and the house of Glenroy was once more at rest.

CHAPTER XIV.

WHEN Lady Waldegrave appeared at breakfast the following morning, she looked still more beautiful than she had done the preceding evening. Madame Latour was as usual by her side, but Lady Elizabeth never was visible in the morning. Dr Price was also there, as silent and sickly-looking as usual. Edith had planned a little excursion by land and water, to show some of the beauties of Glenroy to her guests, and she intended that Reginald should take the management; but her surprise and disappointment were great, when she learnt that he had set off early in the morning to shoot. Here was a fresh act of incivility and unkindness, and Edith vainly tried to falter out some excuse for him to Lady Waldegrave, who heard her in silence, while an

air of languid dissatisfaction gradually stole over her lovely features.

"Ah, le pauvre Saar Reginaal!" exclaimed Madame Latour, in a tone of deep commiseration, and heaving a sigh.

"If you please, Madame, what do you mean by that?" enquired Mrs Macauley, with her usual blunt simplicity.

"Ah, que je le plains!" continued Madame Latour, as if not hearing Mrs Macauley.

The cough and the trot of Amailye were now heard resounding in the stillness of the warm sunny morning, and presently she was descried passing the window with her load on her back. In another second, the loud broad tones of Mr M'Dow were heard interrogating the servant, and next entered the gentleman himself, his face "round as my father's shield," every line and lineament big with triumph and exultation, standing out in bold *alto relievo*. The customary salutations were scarcely over, before it was obvious that Mr M'Dow's exclamation would not be that of Hamlet—"Let me not burst in ignorance," but rather that of his father's ghost,

"I could a tale unfold." It was also evident that the secret with which he was burdened was of an agreeable nature, as not all the respect with which he strove to address Lady Waldegrave, could master the inveterate hoch, hoch, ho, which burst forth even on his introduction. Seating himself at table, he fixed his eyes on her with a stare of astonishment; and while he stuffed one side of his mouth to its utmost extent, he discoursed at large with the other, and accordingly began, "It's most amazing to see how young people shoot up! It seems no time since your ladyship was a little fair-haired missey in a frock, with a doll in your arms, and now you are quite a full-grown lady! It's really wonderful to see the changes a few years bring to pass!"

"I cannot apply that observation to you, Mr M'Dow," said Lady Waldegrave, with a smile; "for, as far as my imperfect recollection serves me, you have undergone very little change during those years."

Mr M'Dow bowed after his manner, then, with a hoch, hoch, ho, replied, "That's pre-

cisely what some of my good friends find fault with me for, my lady; they say that I ought to have changed (my state) before now—hoch, hoch, ho!"

"'Deed, then, and I think so too," said Mrs Macauley, with her usual simplicity; "if you had a wife you would maybe like to stay more at home. But better late than never. I don't think but what you'll get a wife yet, Mr M'Dow."

"Had you ever any doubts of that, Mrs Macauley?" cried Mr M'Dow, in a tone of pique. "I was not aware that ever I had professed celibacy."

"Well, then, I declare from your face I think you're going to get a wife now, Mr M'Dow; you look so croose and canty," said Mrs Macauley.

"O, you're a witch, Mrs Macauley! just a witch," repeated Mr M'Dow, with one of his exuberant roars. "If you had lived a hundred years ago, you would have stood a fair chance of being burnt!"

"O, as sure as death, then, that's just owning that you are going to be married, Mr M'Dow," exclaimed Mrs Macauley, in that accent of joy-

ful surprise which always attends the discovery of a marriage. "And was it not clever in me to find it out? 'deed I think it was. I declare I'm glad of it, for I think it will be a great improvement to you, if she is a sensible, well-principled woman, which I hope she is."

"Well, there's no keeping any thing from you ladies—you really are most amazingly acute! at the same time I'm not sensible of having committed myself in any shape—hoch, hoch, ho!"

"Ah, comme il fait chaud!" exclaimed Madame Latour; "le pauvre Saar Reginaal!"

"By the bye, I was missing a certain gentleman," said Mr M'Dow, with a significant glance directed towards Edith; "but I hope he's not to be long absent, as I'm anxious to come to an understanding with him regarding certain arrangements that shall be nameless,—as we're both bound for the same port, we must take care not to run foul of each other. He's had the advantage of me at the starting; but I suspect I'll make the harbour before him—hoch, hoch, ho!"

This metaphorical flourish was, of course,

Greek and Hebrew to the whole party except Edith and Mrs Macauley. The former coloured and was silent; but the latter exclaimed, "Well, that's right of you, Mr M'Dow, just to tell the truth, and not to think shame about it. What for should not people tell when they are going to be married? and marriage such an honourable state! As sure as any thing, I'm very glad you're going to be settled at last.—Benbowie, are not you happy that Mr M'Dow's going to be married?"

"Surely, surely," said Benbowie; "has she any money?"

"Why, as to that," said Mr M'Dow, with an air of great dignity, and conscious elevation of soul, "I have never made fortune my principal object; I consider it beneath a man of honour and integrity to lay himself out for money; at the same time, I would not quarrel with it if it came in my way—and upon this occasion, the lady's fortune is *shootable;* indeed, I may say, pretty handsome."

Edith tried to utter some complimentary words on the occasion, but found it very difficult to

combine compliments with sincerity. Luckily Mrs Macauley covered all deficiencies: "And what may be the name of the lady, Mr M'Dow, if it is not a secret?"

"Why, if it is, it will not be long one," returned Mr M'Dow, still very consequential; "indeed I strongly suspect the report had reached the country before myself, or I doubt if even my good friend Mrs Macauley, with all her wit and shrewdness, would have taken me up so cleverly. It's amazing how a report of that kind spreads! It was for that reason I wished to lose no time in communicating the event myself to my excellent friend and pawtron, for I only returned home last night; but before this time to-morrow, I have no doubt it will be over the whole country——The lady's name is Miss Collina Muckle of Glasgow."

"Well, I think it's a very honest-like name," said Mrs Macauley. "I had once a sister they called Colin, but she died, poor thing, of St Anthony's fire; and Mr Macauley had a cousin that was married a second marriage to a Mr Mucklehose, a very decent man. I wonder if

she can be any relation of his? He was Bailie Mucklehose, of Portneuk; he was a"——

"The very same!" interrupted Mr M'Dow. "Bailie Mucklehose, of Portneuk, was the fawther, (by his first wife,) of the lady in question; but, at the time of their fawther's death, they dropped the *hose*, thinking the other a more fashionable name, which, perhaps, it is. The Bailie was a most highly respectable man, and left his daughters in good circumstances."

"Well, is it not curious to think that you and I, Mr M'Dow, who have been so long acquaint, are now going to be connected together by marriage? I declare, I think it is very extraordinary to see how things are brought about! And I saw Bailie Mucklehose once, when I was in Glasgow, about five-and-thirty years ago. He was an honest-like, weel fa'ured man, with a fine rosy colour. He was a"——

"Perhaps you may be able to trace a family-likeness here," interrupted Mr M'Dow, plunging his hand into one of his huge pockets, and drawing forth—not a decreet, or reclaiming petition, as in days of yore—but a small, oval, red mo-

rocco case, which, upon being opened, disclosed the full-blown charms of Miss Collina Muckle.

"I am no great judge of painting, myself," said the exulting lover, as he handed it round; "but it strikes me as being most beautifully painted—extremely high finished. I can't say I think the likeness altogether so favourable as it might have been. It is painted by a very young man, who has just set up."

It is unnecessary to be so minute as the artist was, in depicting the charms of the original. Suffice it therefore to say, there was the usual bad drawing and distortion;—there was a large ivory and vermillion cheek, and a smaller burnt umber one—a nose all on one side—round pale eyes of different sizes—a simpering mouth—a range of hair-dresser curls sitting on end—a wooden arm—a white gown—a yellow scarf—a blue cloud—and a coral necklace.

Few and faint were the remarks passed upon Miss Muckle, as she made the round of the table; but luckily Mr M'Dow's perceptions were too obtuse to enable him to feel any omissions. "I had, of course, to return the compliment in kind,"

" but I doubt the painter did not succeed quite as well with me. In fact, the clerical dress is not the most becoming, in my opinion, for a man to sit in; the gown and bands are rather stiff and heavy, and not so fashionable-looking as one could wish. However, the lady was pleased, and that was enough."

" Apropos of pictures," said Edith, to Lady Waldegrave, wishing to turn the conversation from the loves of Mr M'Dow, " have you not yet been able to recollect by whom you sent your picture to me?"

Lady Waldegrave coloured, and in slight confusion answered, " Yes—no—not to a certainty. But I think I shall recover it yet; and if not," she added, with mock gravity, " the loss will not be irreparable. It is one which, I daresay, Mrs Macauley will be kind enough to replace. Won't you paint my picture again, dear Mrs Macauley?"

" 'Deed and I will that," cried Mrs Macauley, in a transport of delight. " I have painted Miss Edith's already, which I will show to you after breakfast; and I've been wanting Sir Reginald to sit too for his picture; and then when I've

done your ladyship, I'm sure I may be well proud, for I'll have painted the three greatest beauties that ever were seen!"

"Sir Reginald should make a well-looked picture," said Mr M'Dow; "that's still a good likeness of him," pointing to a picture of him as a boy, that hung opposite, "though there's not just so much of the pickle in him now as there was then; he was really a wild little dog in these days, as your ladyship may remember. You know what a work he had with you at the first, there was nothing like you; poor Miss Edith was thought nothing of; you were his sweetheart and his wife, and I don't know all what, and I was to promise to marry him to you in my kirk, whenever his papa came home; then you and he cast out about something or another, and I remember him coming to me one day that I chanced to be dining here, in a perfect passion.

"'Mr M'Dow,' says he, 'you're never to marry me to Florinda; I shall never speak to her as long as I live.'

"'O, but,' says I, 'Mr Reginald, how can

that be, when you have promised to marry Miss Florinda ?'

" 'No matter for that,' says he, 'I'm determined I'll never marry her as long as I live, but I'm to marry Edith, and nobody else.'

" 'But if you're to change your mind this way,' says I, 'I don't think I can venture to marry you to any body.'

" 'O, you may depend upon it, Mr M'Dow, I'll never change any more, for Edith's very pretty, and she does whatever I bid her.'

" 'Most capital and unanswerable reasons for choosing a wife,' says I, 'and I've nothing more to say, only you must take care that you're aff wi' the auld love before ye tak on wi' the new.' However, there's been no more changing, and it's all well that ends well—hoch, hoch, ho !"

With an exclamation at the heat of the room, Lady Waldegrave abruptly rose, and taking Madame Latour's arm, passed into the adjoining apartment.

" I hope I have not said any thing that her ladyship or you could take amiss," whispered

Mr M'Dow, fixing his great goggling eyes on Edith, as she was also rising. " It was all a joke together, and amongst friends, of course, there's no secrets in these things. But Miss Malcolm," in a still lower and more mysterious key, " I'm really disappointed at not finding Sir Reginald, especially as it seems my worthy friend Glenroy is not able to see me at present; for this change that's going to take place in my own situation, I'm afraid may inconvenience Sir Reginald and you.—I beg your pardon, Miss Malcolm, but I'll not detain you a moment," following her, and laying a great paw upon her arm; " but I find I must be at the manse the greater part of this week, and I also wish, if possible, to preach on Sunday, though there's a certain awkwardness in appearing in the pulpit too, at such a time. And on Monday I had fixed to return to Glasgow, to be at the disposal of my lady fair, who has not positively fixed the day; but I'm in great hopes it will be between and the 27th, after which we must of course take a marriage jaunt, and when I return I shall be ready to do to others as has been done

to myself—hoch, hoch, hoch, ho—At the same time, rather than disappoint Sir Reginald, I would, if possible, endeavour to arrange my own affairs, so as to be at his service when required. I'm really disappointed at not seeing him, for I've so much to do preparing matters at the manse, that it's not in my power to spend the day here, and I doubt if it will be possible for me to ride over again before I go. I've a mason, a wright, two painters, a sklater, and a sempstress, all hard at work at present, besides having all my own papers and books to shift out of the way of my wife's caps and bonnets; however, I take you bound, Miss Malcolm, that you're not to steal a march upon me in my absence—hoch, hoch, ho!"

Edith would have promised much more to get rid of Mr M'Dow, and giving a hurried affirmative, she disengaged herself from him. And after going a little farther into the depths of the Muckle family with Mrs Macauley, he once more betook himself to Amailye, and trotted away to superintend the adorning of the manse.

Edith found Lady Waldegrave seated at an

open window, while the zealous Madame Latour was gently bedewing her with eau de Cologne.

"Ah, ce vilain Monsieur Makedu!" exclaimed she, turning to Edith on her entrance, "he talk so mosch, et sa voix est assommante! Cette chère Miladi a les nerfs si délicats, he has made her vat you call seek!"

Florinda gave a languid smile, while she said, "The truth is, I have a headach this morning—the breakfast-room felt oppressively hot, and Mr M'Dow is certainly very shocking. All these causes combined have made me very useless, so not to bore you with my megrims, I shall confine myself to my dressing-room for the rest of the morning," rising as she spoke.

Edith in vain assured her the sight of her never could be otherwise than pleasing, and begged, at least, that she might be allowed to attend upon her. It was evident that when Lady Waldegrave spoke of studying others, she meant only to please herself, and her pleasure was to shut herself up in her own apartment, where Edith left her reclining on a couch, with a table before her, covered with flowers, poetry, and

French novels, her lap-dog in her arms, and Madame Latour ever and anon touching her temples with eau de Cologne, while a soft breeze from the lake stirred now and then the beautiful ringlets which she had allowed to fall in graceful disorder about her face.

It was impossible that Edith should not deeply feel the strange capricious conduct of her guests, and be also aware that a scene was carrying on around her, the meaning of which she could not fathom. There was, on the one hand, Reginald's coldness, and even dislike to Lady Waldegrave—his unwillingness to receive them at Glenroy—his anxiety to hurry on his marriage before their arrival—his rudely absenting himself from them. On the other, there was a visit offered under circumstances certainly very peculiar, and a long journey undertaken for a purpose which seemed to hold no place in the minds of either mother or daughter. The latter had indeed declared her aim to be that of effecting a reconciliation between Lady Elizabeth and Glenroy; but why, while she thus laid open her own mind to Edith, had she avoided all confi-

dence in return? Was it—could it be possible, that Reginald had formed an attachment to Madame Latour, or she to him—and that Florinda's real object was to accomplish a marriage between Sir Reginald and her favourite? Edith's pride and delicacy alike revolted at such a supposition—no, she could not think so meanly of either herself or him. The alienation between Sir Reginald and Florinda seemed mutual, and how then could she be desirous of bringing about a union between two people—the one the object of her dislike, the other the friend, it appeared, of her warmest affections?—In vain Edith strove to unravel the strange heap of contradictions in which she felt her thoughts entangled. Never was one less fitted by nature and by education to thread the dark intricacies of the human heart. The path of love and duty had ever been plain before her—she had trod it herself in singleness of heart, and she dreamt not (even when she marked her lover's dubious steps,) of the treacherous quicksands that lay beneath.

CHAPTER XV.

But it was not in the present state of the family that Edith could long indulge in vague reflections. She was soon summoned to attend her father in his study (so called), a room adjoining his dressing-room, into which he had caused himself to be wheeled in his gouty chair. To her surprise, she found he had discarded his dressing-gown and night-cap, and all the insignia of the gout, excepting the fleecy stockings and cloth shoes. His countenance and manner were more than usually calm and benign, and altogether the change was no less agreeable than unexpected.

"I am in hopes I've got the better of the enemy at last," said he, pointing to his feet; "the pain's almost entirely gone to-day; and I've been thinking, that since that poor thing has taken the trouble to come so far to see me, it would

be just as well to let her come here at once, and have it over, and then she can go when she likes, you know; but if I'm laid up again, she may think herself obliged to wait, and there's no knowing when we may get rid of them; and so, I think, Edith, the best thing will be for you just to bring them in here—you can tell them that I've still a touch of the gout. And, Edith, give me that cloak to lay on my legs, these confounded stockings make them look like posts—Stay a little, don't be in such a hurry. I wish [illegible]n my soul it was over,—what the plague brought them here, and a doctor too? Remember, I'm for none of their doctors—I'm neither for doctors nor ministers. And so M'Dow's going to get a wife?—she must have a fine taste! They ought both to be sent to the treadmill. And how's that old goose Molly Macauley behaving herself?"—and so on, till he had landed in the Dhu Moss, and the Skirridale woods, Reginald, Norman, and the black pony.

Aware that Lady Elizabeth could not understand, much less "minister to a mind diseased," her own being nearly in the same state, Edith was

desirous, if possible, to prevent a meeting which she was sure could produce nothing but irritation on both sides. She, therefore, sought to turn his mind from the subject altogether, or, at least, to prevail upon him to postpone the interview till near the time of their departure; but, with all the obstinacy and perverseness of imbecility, Glenroy's wishes strengthened, and his impatience increased, under opposition even in the mildest form, and Edith was obliged to yield the point, and depart on her embassy.

On craving an audience, she was admitted to Lady Elizabeth's dressing-room, where she found her ladyship in her robe de chambre, holding a *levée* of Dr Price, Rousseau, and Rosalie, and like another Julius Cæsar, dictating to all at once.

"Dr Price finds me pretty well this morning," said she, squeezing the tip of Edith's fingers on her entrance; "and I have just been giving him directions as to the sort of draught I should like to have to-day; 'tis of great consequence to have these sort of things suited to one's taste and constitution. By the by, perhaps Glenroy would like to have one of Dr

Price's draughts, they are really very pleasant, something like lemonade, but not quite that neither.—Dr Price, you will be so good as mix up a draught exactly the same as mine, and take it to Glenroy, with my love. I am sure he will be pleased with this little mark of attention from me."

Edith trembled at the very thoughts of such an embassy, and almost fancied she beheld the Chief's crutch uplifted to smite Dr Price and his potion the ground; in great trepidation, she therefore entreated that the kind intention might be at least postponed, and then delivered the message with which she had been charged, though in rather softer terms than she had received it.

Having come expressly, as was supposed, for the purpose of seeing her husband, it was naturally to be concluded, that her ladyship's mind would be quite prepared for the interview; instead of which she fell into a childish flutter at the first mention of it.

" You have taken me quite by surprise, my dear; I really feel quite overcome; any sort of

agitation is so dangerous for me in the present state of my nerves.—Rosalie, fetch Dr Price back immediately; you shall hear what he says; I am entirely guided by him. Rousseau, leave the guitar for the present, take my music, and look out—how my heart beats! I do assure you, my dear, it will be a prodigious exertion for me to meet Glenroy, poor man, at present!"

Edith was so utterly void of affectation herself, that she could not comprehend its effects upon others, and she therefore gave her ladyship credit for the reality of her tremors; she begged she would take her own time, was sure her papa would wish to do what was most agreeable to her, and so on, till the return of Dr Price.

The Doctor was a stupid, inoffensive man, who, for two hundred a-year, a luxurious home, and his travelling expenses, was contented to trot between his own room and Lady Elizabeth's about twenty times a-day, to compound little harmless draughts and powders for her, and to have his advice constantly asked, and never taken.

The result of the consultation however was,

that her ladyship heroically resolved to go through (as she termed it) with the part she had to perform. Dr Price was again dismissed, and Edith desired to wait until she should be dressed. Rosalie was then summoned, and Lady Elizabeth, in spite of her tremors, betaking herself to the labours of the toilet, was soon so completely engrossed by them, that the dreaded interview seemed almost forgotten.

"I always disliked black," said she, addressing Edith; "there's something so *sombre* about it, one never looks dressed; otherwise I'm not sure that it is actually unbecoming to me. It sets off a fair skin, but then it obliges one to use a *soupçon* more rouge than I like. *Apropos*, my dear, one comfort is, that black satin shoes are the most becoming things possible for the feet —all men think so. These are made by Mellnotte, and I think are perfect," added she, while her maid, with great exertion, was forcing them on, "and fit me admirably. Florinda has got my foot. A model of it was taken for the Gallery at Florence—In fact, Princess Pauline was quite jealous of it.—My large gold ear-rings

and bracelets, Rosalie—and—what shall I put on my head? a cap looks so particularly dowdy in black. My purple hat and feathers—Purple, my dear, you know, is a sort of mourning—There, I think, that looks very well—the feathers the least in the world more to the left side, and a ringlet or two pulled a little more down.—Now," contemplating herself from head to foot in the mirror, and jerking her head and shoulders, " my gloves and shawl, Rosalie. Now comes the true test of taste," turning to Edith—" In fact, nobody that has not been abroad *can* put on a shawl." And at length, equipped like one of the *élégantes* in " *Les Modes de Paris,*" her ladyship set forth leaning on Edith; then suddenly stopping, she exclaimed, " But I must have my dogs, and I am sure Glenroy will be delighted with them—Bijou is *such* a love !"

Here Edith was obliged to interpose, and, aware of her father's abhorrence of lap-dogs, with much difficulty succeeded in prevailing on her ladyship to dispense with their attendance for the present.

On arriving at the door of the study there was another demur.

"I hope it is not necessary that I should say much to Glenroy of the death of your poor brother, my dear. Such a subject would quite overcome me at present. I must try to rouse and amuse him a little, poor man—Don't you think so? Another time I shall take my guitar, but perhaps it would be rather too much at first—indeed I don't feel equal to the exertion."

Edith, with tears in her eyes, entreated she would make no allusion to the death of her brother, but merely converse on general subjects; and after a little more delay they entered into the presence of the Chief. He made an attempt, with the help of his stick, to rise to receive his lady, who advanced, and with a very good grace, saluted him after her fashion; then seating herself by him, laid her hand on his arm.

"It's a long while since you and I met, Glenroy, and I'm sorry to find you so great an invalid, though, 'pon my word, I think you look wonderfully well, considering. You find the gout very painful, I'm afraid. My poor brother, Hey-

wood, is quite a martyr to it. He really looks almost as old as you do. In fact, he is completely broken down; and, do you know, I am much afraid his son, Lord Lanville, shows symptoms of it already, which is very alarming. He is a charming young man, not actually handsome, but extremely *distingué* in his appearance and manners. He is a great favourite of mine, and quite *le cheri des dames*. He is so very sensible and attentive—quite amiable; but he certainly is delicate, and I know my poor brother is at times wretched about him. An only son! Conceive how dreadful if he were to lose him!"

Here Glenroy burst out, "And why should he not lose an only son as well as his neighbours? I know what it is to have lost an only son. My Norman was taken from me whether I would or not; and—and——" He could not go on.

"Ah, true!" said his lady, in a tone of commiseration; "that was very sad. But we wont talk of these things, Glenroy; they are too much for us. You must not allow yourself to get hipped—You ought to come to town for a little in the season. We are to have Pasta next win-

ter, and I have already secured an excellent box. Her Medea is quite perfect. I am sure you would be enchanted with it. Her despair at the loss of her children was absolutely too much. I assure you I was quite overcome."

Edith saw a storm ready to burst forth, and hastily interposed.

"You have got a more pleasing sight to show papa, in Lady Waldegrave. I am sure London contains nothing more beautiful."

"Very true, very true," said her ladyship, with a nod of approbation. "Florinda *is pétrie de graces*, and she will cause a prodigious sensation in the world. In fact, wherever she has appeared, you can form no idea of the admiration she has excited. She has of course already had many splendid offers—at least what would have been splendid for any one else—but Florinda is too young to marry yet. Early marriages are foolish things, you know, Glenroy."

A sort of growl was here ejaculated by Glenroy. "And late ones worse," he muttered to himself.

"The weather is so fine, I hope you will soon

be able to get out, papa," said Edith. Then turning to Lady Elizabeth, "Perhaps you will take a drive to-day in papa's low phaeton?"

"No, thank you, my dear; I seldom go out when I am in the country; and besides, while I am here, I wish to devote as much of my time as possible to Glenroy; that, together with my letters and music, will fill up my mornings entirely. *Apropos*, I must bring my guitar next time. I have been practising that charming little *romance* to sing to you, Glenroy, '*Vous me quittez pour aller à la gloire*'—I think you will like it."

"I'm for no guitars, nor any thing of the kind," interrupted Glenroy, impatiently. "I take very little pleasure now even in my own piper, though he's the best in the country, and has carried off the Highland Society's prize three times at the competition. And he was *his* foster brother too." Here Glenroy's voice faltered, and allowed his lady to strike in.

"Ah, well, we wont say any more about that —we shall talk a little about my daughter."

"*Your* daughter! what's your daughter to me?" cried Glenroy, peevishly.

"There's no relationship certainly," said her ladyship, condescendingly, "but circumstances, you know, have formed a sort of connexion, and I should have brought her with me just now to show her to you, but she has got a little of a *migraine* this morning; she has become rather subject to them of late, and I should be very uneasy if I hadn't the most perfect reliance on Dr Price. You must allow me to present Dr Price to you, Glenroy; I am sure you will like him; he is quite a superior person. I assure you I consider my life perfectly safe in his hands."

"I'll have none of your doctors," cried Glenroy; "I desire never to see the face of a doctor —a set of ignorant, upsetting——What did the doctors do for—for—for my Norman?"

"Ah, we wont say any thing about that, Glenroy! Let us talk of something else. You have never been abroad, I believe. Do you know, I really think you would find great pleasure in making a little excursion through France and Italy. You needn't stay long in one place, you know; and I think moving about might be of service to you; and, by the by, I can recom-

mend the best creature in the world as a courier for you, quite a treasure,—a Greek, and speaks six different languages. My nephew, Lord Lanville, certainly benefited very much by change of climate. I assure you I was quite uneasy about him when he first joined us at Paris; for you know an only son one is always anxious about; and his poor father quite doats upon him; indeed he is deserving of it, for he is a most superior young man, and I have a real regard for him. Besides, to let you into a little family secret, he is distractedly in love with my daughter, and I think she is attached to him. But I don't wish her to marry yet. She can at any time form a brilliant alliance. In fact, with Florinda's rank, beauty, fortune, talents, she may unquestionably be considered the first match in the kingdom."

"The first match in the kingdom!" exclaimed Glenroy, in a transport of rage; "what makes her the first match in the kingdom? A woman—a poor insignificant woman, to be the first match in the kingdom! The first match in the kingdom is the man who will come after me, and that man's Reginald Malcolm! And if my son had

been alive, *he* would have been the first match in the kingdom! A woman to be the first match in the kingdom!" and Glenroy actually swelled out with passion.

To this burst his lady gave a little weak, angry, affected laugh, then said, "You certainly forget, Glenroy, who my daughter is? Lady Waldegrave is a peeress in her own right, and——"

"A snuff of tobacco in her own right! Pretty rights, to be sure—I wonder what right she has to be the first match in the kingdom! What are your peers and peeresses to me? creatures made by a word of a mouth or a scratch of a pen! The king could make a peeress of a turnip-shaw, if he chose—he could make Molly Macauley a peeress, if he pleased, to-morrow; but I defy all the kings on the face of the earth to make the Chief of Glenroy!"

"Certainly the king cannot make a savage," retorted the lady, quivering with indignation, and rising as she spoke; but Glenroy despised her too much even to hear what she said, but kept muttering and murmuring to himself, "The first match in the kingdom! A woman—*any* woman,

to be the first match in the kingdom! Who ever heard of a woman being a chief? A woman's just as capable of being a chief as—as this stick," stamping his own with an air of defiance on the carpet. "Reginald Malcolm, my heir and successor, is the first match in the kingdom, either of man or woman!"

Edith had made many ineffectual attempts to interpose her still small voice between the incensed parties, but in vain; neither of them would listen to a word she had to say; and all she could do was to follow Lady Elizabeth, as she tottered out of the room, her flounces and feathers vibrating, and her whole dress seeming as though it were a party in her exasperated feelings. She declared her determination of instantly leaving the house—She had been treated with the greatest disrespect—her daughter most improperly spoken of—It was impossible to remain another night under the same roof—go she would—she must see Dr Price and Rousseau immediately.

Edith strove to soothe her, as she best could, but in vain; till at length, with tears in her eyes, she alluded to the shock her father's mind had

received by the loss of her brother, and feelingly deplored the little aberrations of memory he had been subject to ever since that sad event.

"O! now I understand," said her ladyship, brightening up all at once.—"I understand," tapping her forehead significantly with her fore finger. "Poor man! but I ought to have been made aware of that circumstance before. It was quite wrong to conceal it from me—Poor man! I am quite sorry for him; at the same time, nothing can excuse the very improper manner in which he spoke of my daughter. Sir Reginald Malcolm to be compared to her!—too ridiculous!—A person of no consequence whatever, and an uncommonly disagreeable man. He, the first match in the kingdom! Ha, ha, ha!—poor man. I—but I must see Dr Price directly. I have been excessively agitated and alarmed." And Dr Price being summoned, Edith withdrew, and returned to her father. She found him still boiling over, like a huge cauldron; and she was immediately assailed with a torrent of invective against his lady. Upon attempting to

explain away the offence, it was immediately turned against herself.

"I always knew you were a weak creature," said he, addressing her with an inflamed visage. "How could you be any thing else, brought up by that idiot, Molly Macauley—though, to give her her due, she's a King Solomon, compared to that other woman. What could you mean by bringing a woman that's not in her senses, to molest me?—A woman that's mad! And you're very little better, to bring her to me in the state of health that I'm in.—She's enough to make any man mad! I shall quit my house if I'm to be tormented in this manner. *Her* daughter the first man in the kingdom!"

"*Match*, papa. She only meant as——"

"Now, hold you your tongue, and don't contradict me. Man and match is all one. I know what she said, and what she meant. *Her* daughter, forsooth!—What's her daughter? Reginald never could bear her. He showed his sense, and I should never have let them enter my door, considering how they behaved to him. And where's Reginald?—And—and send Molly

Macauley and Benbowie. Are *they* away to the shooting too, that I'm left alone all day?"

Edith gladly consigned the Chief to the hands of his two faithful adherents, to whom he had the luxury of relating his injuries at full length; more fortunate in that respect than his lady, who found less willing and sympathising auditors in her daughter and Madame Latour.

CHAPTER XVI.

Sir Reginald returned from shooting, and on entering the dining-room before dinner, he found only Madame Latour, Mrs Macauley, Dr Price, and two or three chance guests of no note, who kept apart with Benbowie. Lady Elizabeth was commonly the last to appear, and Edith was sitting with Lady Waldegrave, who chose to remain in her own apartment, on the plea of continued indisposition.

" I wonder what all you young people are made of now-a-days," said Mrs Macauley, looking with eyes of affectionate compassion on Sir Reginald, who certainly had nothing of the free and joyous air of the sportsman, but looked languid and dispirited. " You are all so tender now, so different from what young people were in my day, when we were so stout and hearty ! There's

Lady Waldegrave been shut up in her room the whole of this fine sunny day, not well; there's you——"

"I hope—there is nothing——" stammered Sir Reginald to Madame Latour.

"Ah, oui," said Madame Latour, with a deep sigh, and a shake of her head. "Ladi Waldegrâve est un peu malade depuis ce matin; c'est sa sensibilité extreme! ah! si elle avoit la tranquillité de Mademoiselle Malcomb, votre sœur!" and Madame Latour heaved another sigh.

Reginald was silent for a few moments, as if mastering his agitation, then said, in a calm tone, "I trust Lady Waldegrave's indisposition is not of a serious nature. Probably it is occasioned by the uncommon heat, which has been almost too much for me. Miss Malcolm is not my sister," he added, in a less firm voice.

"Ah, que je suis bête! how I do meestak! Assurément elle ne vous ressemble nullement, elle est si calme! si tranquille! What you call enseepede—n'est ce pas?"

Reginald coloured, and was silent; but Mrs Macauley had caught at the word insipid as some-

how coupled with Edith, and she exclaimed, "Insipid! You're not surely meaning to call Miss Edith insipid? or I'm thinking you don't know the meaning of the word, Madame. Insipid, you know, means *wersh*, and *wersh* means insipid; and I can tell you she's any thing but *wersh*, though she's so sweet and gentle."

"Ah, pardon, Madame Macalie, si—if I do speak of Mademoiselle Malcomb vat is not propaar—c'est une personne très aimable, Miss Malcomb; et quoique sa beauté ne soit pas si éblouissante, si parfaite que celle de Ladi Waldegrâve, elle est très bien—vat you call prettie well."

"Pretty well!" repeated Mrs Macaulcy, kindling up at this fresh insult. "Pretty well! did I ever hear the like of that?" Then softening down as quickly as she blazed up, "But though I'm thinking you're no just so ignorant of our language as you would make us trow, yet I see you cannot express yourself properly, or you never would speak in such a way of Miss Edith, and so I should not be angry with you. Pretty well! I cannot think enough of it! Pretty well

means just well enough; and to call Glenroy's daughter just well enough!"

Madame Latour either did not, or affected not, to understand Mrs Macauley better than Mrs Macauley understood her; but seeing her displeased, pretended to conciliate her.

"Pardonnez moi, chère Madame Macalie, assûrement vous not onderstand—if you tink me capable to say de tings of Meess Malcomb pour vous offenser; c'est une personne de beaucoup de merite dans son genre; elle n'a pas les graces ni l'éclat de Ladi Waldegrâve, ni son air distingué, ni sa sensibilité extrême."

"I don't very well know what you're saying, Madame," said Mrs Macauley, rather impatiently, "for I'm no great French scholar; but I can tell you, though Miss Edith does not give herself any grand airs, she's as ladylike in her quiet genteel way, as any lady in the land; and though she may not be so showy and catching-like, for all that, hers is the face nobody could ever weary of, it's so good, and so sweet, and so sensible, and so loving too. I've often thought how she answered to a verse of one of our Scotch

songs—I'll let you hear it, and see if it's not like Miss Edith." And she repeated slowly and distinctly, the most beautiful perhaps of all Burns's beautiful verses :

> "As in the bosom o' the stream
> The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en,
> So trembling, pure, was tender love
> Within the breast o' bonny Jean."

"Ah! quel amour transi!" said Madame Latour, with a shudder, as she turned to Sir Reginald. At that moment, Lady Elizabeth and Edith entered, and the conversation of course dropt.

All traces of the matrimonial fracas had entirely disappeared from Lady Elizabeth's aspect, for the variety of her frivolous pursuits seldom allowed her mind to dwell long on one subject. Satisfied that she had amply fulfilled her duty by the visit of condolence to her husband, she was now decked out in pink and silver, and smiles, and short petticoats, and white shoes.

"Florinda has not been quite well this morning, Dr Price, and I think she is rather out of spirits; 'tis dull for her, you know, to be in the

country; however, she has promised to join us in the evening, otherwise I must make a point of her seeing you, Dr Price. I wish I could have had her picture as I found her just now—in my life I never beheld any thing so perfect! She was sitting at a table, her cheek resting on her hand—you know her attitude—her hair falling over her shoulders—

> 'Tender or free, in smiles or sadness drest,
> The reigning humour ever suits her best.'"

"'Deed, then, I think, begging your ladyship's pardon, the fewer humours people have so much the better," observed Mrs Macauley.

"Il n'y a rien de plus ennuyeux que les personnes qui n'ont qu'un seul ton—N'est il pas vrai?" said Madame Latour.

Sir Reginald looked as if he understood the innuendo, and he answered in French: "The human mind has often been compared to a musical instrument; perhaps most minds may be capable of giving a variety of tones, but it is not every one who has the power of calling them forth."

"Ah, oui, mais le jeu ne vaut pas la chandelle,

to what you call draw out cette espèce de personne; les gens reservés ressemblent, à mon avis, à cet instrument de votre pays le bag-peep, which it take such a force to sound;" and her glance was directed to Edith, who sat near, reading.

"The analogy is not just," replied Sir Reginald, gravely; "there are minds like the organ, of great power and melody when skilfully called forth; but it is not every hand that can touch the right chords, or every ear that can appreciate their excellence." And he sighed as he said it.

"Ah, oui, c'est vat I do say,—il faut de la sympathie dans le gout; sans sympathie l'ame ne peut être d'accord, et sans harmonie le cœur ne vaut rien."

Sir Reginald turned abruptly from Madame Latour to Edith, and, as if he felt that he owed her some reparation for the innuendos that had so evidently been levelled against her, he devoted himself to her until they were summoned to dinner.

On leaving the dining-room, Edith was fastened upon by Lady Elizabeth, who again appro-

priated her to her own particular use, as an auditor.

"You will go to Florinda, Madame Latour, and, with my love, tell her I desire to see her in the drawing-room by and by.—You, my dear," to Edith, "will accompany me to my dressing-room, where we shall be quiet, as I must have a little talk with you. I have much to say, and I shall not have much time, as, of course, we cannot remain long here. And, by the by, I have never properly introduced you to my darlings. I am obliged to keep them in my dressing-room for fear of your large dogs; and that was one of the things I wanted to say to you—you really must have those creatures shut up. You must know, I got Amor and Amoretta from Cardinal Caccia-Piatti, an uncommonly fascinating fine-looking person. He paid me great attention when I was at Rome.—I dare say you find this room rather warm, but I am obliged to have a large fire on account of my dogs—they feel the cold of this climate dreadfully. Dr. Price was of opinion, that Amoretta's last attack was decidedly rheumatic. Unluckily her dog-basket has a window, and I think the cold air had

streamed in upon her, so I was obliged to have it closed up, which makes it dull, and I don't think she has ever liked it since. If it were not for my cider down quilt, I don't know how I should have kept them alive.—That Cardinal really was a delightful person; he thought my pronunciation of the language quite perfect. When you go, you must make a point of getting introduced to him. I think Glenroy would like him." So flowed on the babbling stream of her ladyship's eloquence; and even Edith's patience, great as it was, was nearly exhausted, before it could be brought to a cessation, or she could prevail on her to return to the drawing-room. On entering the apartment, Edith beheld Lady Waldegrave and Madame Latour seated on a sopha, and Sir Reginald leaning over the back of it. A blush was on Florinda's cheek; but traces of deep emotion were visible on Reginald's features, as he bent his head towards her, and spoke in a low voice. Madame Latour was, or affected to be, engrossed by Fido, whom she was fondling with true French vivacity. A strange undefinable something, she could not tell what, struck Edith at the sight. "This

odious Madame Latour," thought she. It was, however, a mere sudden sensation, unattended by any train of reflections, for as Lady Elizabeth advanced, Reginald hastily broke off from Lady Waldegrave, and, turning abruptly round, joined the rest of the gentlemen, who were standing at some distance.

" How charmingly you look, my love !" exclaimed Lady Elizabeth, quitting her hold of Edith for a moment, to embrace her daughter. " And what a very pretty dress ! that is Madame Belcour, I am sure ; how I wish I had seen it, and I should have ordered one the same—how extremely becoming !" with an air of chagrin. Then in a peevish tone, " But you ought to have more flowers in your hair, my dear child ; only look at the size of my head, which you know is far from being *outré*."

" You forget I have had a headach this morning, mamma," said Lady Waldegrave, evidently annoyed ; " consequently my head is not able to bear much."

" Absurd, my dear !" in a peevish voice ; " who ever heard of a headach, or any thing else, being

an excuse for being ill dressed? If you choose to say it is your fancy to dress so and so, I can understand that, and it may pass; but I do assure you it is very bad taste to make any thing of that sort a matter of necessity. You must expect to be pitied if you do; and when once a person comes to be pitied, there is an end of her consequence for ever."

"Then pray, mamma, suffer me to hide my diminished head quietly in this corner," said Lady Waldegrave, trying to laugh away her mother's absurdity.

"Ah, vous et moi, miladi," said Madame Latour, with an air of mock humility, "devons nous contenter de porter des fleurs sur la tête; mais quant à Ladi Waldegrâve, les fleurs naissent sous ses pas. Et, apropos, Saar Reginaal, est ce que votre fleur favorite croit dans cette triste contrée? vat you call Forget-me not?" But Sir Reginald was by this time deeply absorbed in a book, and made no answer. "Voyons donc ce qui vous occupe," cried Madame Latour, playfully drawing the book from before him; "de la poësie!" and she ran over the lines, as if

going to read them aloud; then handing the book to Lady Waldegrave, "Lizez donc, chère miladi, votre voix charmante embellira même ces vers."

Lady Waldegrave took the book without answering, glanced her eye over the page, and as she closed it, exclaimed, "Ah, there *was* love!"

The play was Count Basil—the lines which had drawn forth the remark, were those touching and beautiful ones, uttered as he gazes on Victoria for the last time—

> "To be so near thee, and for ever parted!
> For ever lost! what art thou now to me?
> Shall the departed gaze on thee again?
> Shall I glide past thee in the midnight hour,
> Whilst thou perceiv'st it not, and think'st, perhaps,
> 'Tis but the mournful breeze that passes by?"

Sir Reginald's eyes had been fixed on Florinda intently as she read; then, suddenly starting, he said, in a hurried manner, "Edith, won't you give us some music?"

"Do you remember, Edith, you promised to sing me one of your Scotch songs?" said Lady Waldegrave, gaily. "Pray let me have one of your oldest of old ballads; and don't lose time,"

she added in a whisper, "while mamma is busy talking to that very civil attentive gentleman, who looks as if he would listen for half a century."

Edith arose, and, as she turned towards the piano, she saw and was struck with the expression of Reginald's countenance; his eyes were fixed on the spot where Lady Waldegrave and Madame Latour were seated, while she passed him unnoticed—unheeded. A strange pang shot through her heart; her eyes filled with tears; she could not define the nature of her feelings; she would have shrunk from the attempt, even had it been in her power, as she would have done from the point of a dagger. She began to busy herself in turning over the music, as if seeking for something, though she knew not what, till her agitation subsided; and having selected that most beautiful of all Scottish airs, Gilderoy, she began to sing a verse of the old ballad. She possessed from nature a melodious voice, a fine ear, and an intuitive refinement of taste—gifts, which, if they did not constitute her a first-rate musician, rendered her at least a very touching and delight-

ful one. But on the present occasion, Edith's powers seemed all to have failed her—her voice was weak and tremulous, her ear was unconscious of sound, and all her perceptions were of a mixed and painful nature. Aware of her failure, she rose from the instrument, and faltering out an excuse, begged some one else would take her place: Lady Waldegrave attempted some faint commendations, then rose, and was led by Sir Reginald to the harp.

Poor Edith's failure was only rendered more conspicuous by Florinda's display. She was in brilliant voice, and, with perfect self-possession, played and sang several beautiful Italian and French airs, in the manner of a perfectly well-taught and highly-finished musician. Lady Waldegrave was much too well bred to practise any of the little, commonplace, paltry airs of coquetry: at the same time, it might be discovered by a discerning eye, that admiration was the aim and scope of all her actions—the stimulus to all her powers. Nothing could appear more natural and graceful than her movements and attitudes, nothing more simple and unstudied than her varied

modes of charming. But as La Bruyere says—"Combien d'art pour rentrer dans la nature!"

Symptoms of impatience were now visible in the countenance of Lady Elizabeth, and Rousseau and the guitar were summoned, which seemed the signal for her daughter to retire from the field. With an exclamation at the heat of the room and the beauty of the night, she rose and passed into the small drawing-room. A few minutes elapsed without any one following.

"Ladi Waldegrâve a laissé ses gants," said Madame Latour, looking to Sir Reginald, as she held them up. Reginald extended his hand to take them, then turned hastily away, and addressed some remark to the person next him.

"I will take Florinda her gloves," said Edith, with an elasticity of spirit she did not stop to analyze, and could not easily have accounted for; and, without noticing Madame Latour's look of displeasure, she seized the gloves, and followed Lady Waldegrave. The glow of excitement which had so lately lighted up her beautiful face, had fled, and the same expression of languid dis-

satisfaction was visible which Edith had formerly observed.

"I fear you have fatigued yourself by singing too much," said Edith. And she proceeded to praise her musical powers, with all the ardour of generous and sincere admiration. Lady Waldegrave appeared but little gratified with the commendations, for she received them slightly, and her thoughts seemed wandering while Edith spoke.

"I fear you are unwell, dear Florinda," said Edith, at a loss to account for the coldness and abstraction of one who but a few minutes before had been all animation and brilliancy.

"Oh, no, not ill," replied Lady Waldegrave, in the accent of one who felt rather annoyed than soothed by the enquiry.

"Then surely you can have nothing to vex or disquiet you," said Edith softly. "Ah, Florinda, if you have, would that you thought me worthy to share your confidence!"

"You would be shocked were I to tell you the cause of my *vapeurs*," said Lady Waldegrave, with affected solemnity; "how shall I own to you

that I am a *little* whimsical; and a little—the very least grain in the world—capricious?" Edith felt hurt at the taunting manner in which she was treated, and remained silent.

"I see you are shocked, Edith, love, at such an acknowledgment; most people would as soon confess that they lie and steal, as that they are in the least degree capricious; but for my part, I have none of that virtuous abhorrence to a little caprice—it certainly renders the character—or at least the manners, more *piquant*—for example, I am tired of singing sentimental songs all the evening, and that you will call being capricious, and I now wish to amuse myself by talking nonsense; but I fear you are too wise to talk nonsense, Edith?"

"Not on proper subjects," answered Edith, gravely, "but——"

"My dear Edith! for heaven's sake, don't use such an old governess phrase, as 'proper subjects!' But, indeed, I am not aware we were upon any important subject in particular,—were we, Edith?"

"You had not thought it so, else you would

not have asked the question," replied Edith coldly, but gently.

"Ah, I am the most forgetful creature in the world—especially when there is such a moon—such a lovely moon, to gaze upon! Come, let us enjoy its beams, and escape the tinkle of mamma's guitar out of doors." There was an old-fashioned glass door which opened upon a sort of terrace walk, and she stept out. Edith and she took two or three turns backwards and forwards, admiring the beauty of the night, while Florinda occasionally warbled a few notes, or repeated a line or two of Petrarch; then half pettishly exclaimed, "Have you nothing to say on the charms of moonlight, Edith?"

Edith, roused from the reverie into which she had fallen, replied, "Nothing of my own, but I could be eloquent in the words of Ossian, only I suspect you could not enter into my enthusiasm for our mountain bard. Do you remember the exquisite opening of Thalaba?

'How beautiful is night!
A dewy freshness fills the silent air;
No mist obscures, nor cloud, nor speck, nor stain,
Breaks the serene of heaven;

> In full-orb'd glory yonder moon divine
> Rolls through the dark blue depths!'"

"Such a description is quite illustrative of the night," said Florinda, carelessly, "but it is too cold and abstracted for me—and so is the night itself, to speak the truth. It wants the charm of an Italian moonlight—the rich, warm, glowing, indescribable charm which there pervades the atmosphere, and fills the heart—as some one, Madame de Stael, I believe, has well said, the very perfume of the flowers in Italy produces something of melody on the senses, and, to use her own words, 'vous éprouvez un bien-être si parfait, un si grand amitié de la nature pour vous, que rien n'altère les sensations agréables qu'elle vous cause.' This is what she says of Naples—dear, dear, loved Naples!" exclaimed she, fervently, as at that moment they were joined by Madame Latour and Sir Reginald.

"I cannot join in your eulogium on Italy," said Edith, "as it is still a sealed book to me. But here are those who will, I have no doubt. Were you, Reginald, as much enamoured of Naples as Florinda seems to be?"

"Quite," he replied, in an emphatic tone.

"And, like her, do you, too, look with something of disdain on the loveliest of our Highland nights?"

"Not with disdain; but with more of admiration than love."

"I thought you had loved your own country, Reginald," said Edith, pensively.

"I have a great respect for it," replied he; "love, perhaps, is peculiar to Italy," he added, with a sigh.

"Ah, oui," cried Madame Latour, "admirer, respecter, c'est *une* chose,—aimer, adorer, c'en est une autre! par exemple, j'ai un profond respect pour vos hautes montagnes, et pour vos sombres lacs—vat you call locks; pour vos forêts de pins—vat you call feers—et que quelques personnes appellent 'le deuil de l'été,'—et en verité il y a trop de deuil dans vos tableaux—ils sont tristes; j'aime comme Saar Reginaal le climat à la fois passionné et riant, tel que celui de la belle Italie."

"And I," said Edith, "however much I might admire, and even enjoy, the fair skies, and the flowers, and the melody, and the odours of Italy,

am sure I should ever *love* the clouds and the mountains, the firs and the heather, of my own native land; to me the very hooting of these owls has a charm, as associated in my mind with all that I love, or ever loved."

She stopped, and blushed at her own warmth.

"Ah, ma chère!" exclaimed Madame Latour, gently pressing her arm, and looking in her face with a smile, "croyez moi, c'est de l'amitié, non de l'amour, que vous avez éprouvé; le hibou est l'emblème de la sagesse, jamais on ne l'associa avec l'amour."

Edith coloured deeply—she tried to laugh, but she could not succeed, for a sigh from Sir Reginald smote her heart. He walked slowly away, then returned with the air of one who is irresolute whether to go or stay. Madame Latour now complained of "a frisson," and, shivering, hurried into the house. Florinda, Reginald, and Edith, remained some time longer, but the two former showed no inclination to converse; and, after some fruitless attempts on Edith's part, they all followed Madame Latour's example, and soon after separated for the night.

CHAPTER XVII.

The next day was Sunday—day of rest to the poor and the toil-worn—of weariness to the rich and the idle. Ah! little do they enter into the feelings of many who look forward to this day, as the day when even the "wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest," as the day blessed and hallowed, to those on whom rests, in its full force, the primeval command, "Six days shalt thou labour;" and which makes the Sabbath lovely in the sight

"Of blessed angels, pitying human cares;"

as the day when heavenly truths are proclaimed alike to all, from the prince to the beggar; from the man of grey hairs standing on the threshold of the grave, to the young who have lately entered the arena of this life—there, in the house of God, "the rich and the poor meet together;"

and there they are reminded of those impressive truths, so humbling to the haughty, so elevating to the lowly—"that the Lord is the maker of them all," and that one day they shall stand before his judgment-seat, without respect of persons, to "receive the reward of the deeds done in the body." On that day, how many a sorrowing heart can more freely pour forth its griefs to that gracious ear which is ever open to the cry of the afflicted!—

> ——"on every sea,
> Which Europe's navies plough—yes, in all lands
> From pole to pole, or civilized, or rude,
> People there are to whom the *Sabbath* morn
> Dawns, shedding dews into their drooping hearts."

The religious observances at Glenroy were entirely of a negative character; there was neither music or billiards on Sunday. Such of the family as chose went to church, and such as chose remained at home. Mrs Macauley, except when Glenroy prevented her, was a regular attender of church, as she said even Mr M'Dow's preaching was better than none; and Edith generally went to the afternoon service, which was per-

formed in what Mr M'Dow called English, the morning service being in Gaelic, for the benefit of the aborigines of the country. On this morning, the party having lingered over a late breakfast, were now severally settled at their occupations. Lady Elizabeth and Dr Price were playing at *spilichins;* Lady Waldegrave was drawing; Madame Latour was sitting by her, alternately stringing small pearls, and laughing over a French play; Edith was reading Milton; Sir Reginald held a newspaper in his hand. Such was the position of the party, when Captain and Mrs Malcolm of Inch Orran, and their daughter, were announced. Edith hastened to meet them with her usual simple kindness of manner, heightened by the affection she ever retained for them, and then introduced them to her guests. Lady Elizabeth eyed them as if she had been short-sighted, and, having bowed an acknowledgment, resumed her game. Florinda's manners were what is called charming (in a superficial way) when she chose to show off; and she was all grace, ease, and suavity. Madame Latour loved company of any kind, and she

closed her book, and went on stringing her pearls. There was something in the calmness and mildness of Mrs Malcolm's manner peculiarly dignified and unaffected. She appeared wholly forgetful of self, and strong in the native, elegant simplicity of a mind, which diffused itself over her whole bearing and deportment,—

> " Qui etoit de tout temps et de toutes modes."

Of all the modifications of manner which are to be met with in society, perhaps the most generally pleasing is simplicity, even as that water is the purest which has no taste, that air the freshest which has no odour. Such was the impression which Mrs Malcolm's manner generally produced on all whose hearts were still alive to the charms of nature, as even the most sophisticated unconsciously feel subdued beneath the bland influence of native goodness. Since the loss of her son, Mrs Malcolm's manner had ever retained a still more pensive, chastened cast, than had formerly characterized it; and her pale brow, " tender and gravely sweet," still wore " a look of days gone by." This was the first

time she had seen Sir Reginald since his return, and for a moment the tide of sad recollection rushed over her heart as she thought, "such as he is, might *my* Ronald now have been!" But soon the emotion died away beneath the habitual resignation of her soul; the cloud passed from her mild brow and pale cheek, as she regained her usual serenity.

Mrs Malcolm was neither a bigot nor a zealot, but she could not avoid seeing how the day, so sacred in her estimation, was disregarded and degraded by those whom she was now among; and her eye rested more in sorrow than in anger on the frivolous occupations they were engaged in.

"It is so long since I have seen you, Mrs Malcolm," said Edith, surveying her with looks of gladness, "that I scarcely know where to begin with my enquiries."

"It is indeed a long while since we have met," said Mrs Malcolm; "but though I seldom go from home now, yet, had I known of the arrival of Lady Elizabeth Malcolm and Lady Waldegrave, I should have taken an earlier opportunity

of waiting upon them;—not this day certainly; for I came for a different purpose; I could not think of passing your door, without asking you to accompany us to your church. There is no service in our own to-day; and our good friend, Mr Stewart, is to officiate in the absence of Mr M'Dow."

"I shall go with much pleasure," said Edith; "and perhaps others in company may also join the party."

"Certainly," said Lady Waldegrave, with one of her most winning looks; "I shall be too happy to be allowed to accompany you."

"Going to church!" cried Lady Elizabeth, who, being tired of spilickins, here joined the conversation; "very proper — I approve of going to church—I think it quite right, absolutely necessary, for the sake of example to the lower orders of the people."

"If it is proper for the lower orders," said Mrs Malcolm, gently, "it must be equally so for the higher."

"By no means," replied Lady Elizabeth,

warmly, " it is quite a different thing; it is very well known, that in this country the common people do require to go to church; it is different abroad, though even there they attend mass very regularly; but then, you know, that is soon over, and they have a thousand innocent ways of amusing themselves and spending the day, which the people here have no idea of. They have operas, and theatres, and dancing, and all sorts of pretty harmless amusements."

" It is many years since I was on the continent," said Mrs Malcolm, in the same gentle manner, " and therefore I am, perhaps, scarcely entitled to speak of the customs that prevail there now; but at that time, I confess, my feelings were hurt at witnessing what appeared to me the profanation of a day associated in my mind with all that is solemn and sacred."

" Of course, on going from our own country, we carry our prejudices along with us," said Sir Reginald, " and we are scandalized at seeing our neighbours with happy faces, on a day when we have always been accustomed to measure

our piety by the length and solemnity of our own."

"Ah, excellent! excellent!" exclaimed Madame Latour; "que ce mot 'solemn' me fait frissonner!"

"I—why, yes, I don't think it is a good thing to be too solemn," observed Lady Elizabeth, with the air of a Solon; "it defeats the object—and—and—in short, I don't think it answers."

"I am sorry I should have used a word which has so many unpleasing ideas attached to it," said Mrs Malcolm, sweetly; "but, in my mind, solemnity is not necessarily associated with gloom or melancholy. There is a solemn stillness in the air of the Sabbath, which conveys to me ideas of the most pleasurable kind. It seems to combine all the tranquillity and repose of the night with the light and gladness of the day."

"Mais pourquoi you forbeed dans cette contrée toute demonstration de joie?" enquired Madame Latour.

"I know no demonstrations of rational joy that are forbidden," replied Mrs Malcolm; "the

mere excess of animal spirits certainly does not harmonize with the day given for nobler purposes. But there may be, and I am sure there is, much quiet, heartfelt, homefelt, happiness on that day. I know no more pleasurable sight, than that of our own poor people in their clean dresses, with cheerful though sedate faces, assembling together to hear the glad tidings, which tell them of peace, and hope, and love."

"Mais la danse et la musique, par exemple, vous les regardez comme des péchés mortels—chez nous, elles sont les demonstrations de notre joie; de notre reconnoissance, de notre amour de Dieu," and Madame Latour raised her eyes in a pretended ecstasy of devotion.

"Where such feelings are truly produced, and bring forth corresponding fruits, we should certainly be cautious how we condemn the means," replied Captain Malcolm; "as some one has well said, 'virtuous action is all the real worth of intelligent being;' but in this land we have no reason to expect that music and dancing should lead to the knowledge of God, and

the practice of piety. Even splendid rites have been found both useless and pernicious, in alluring the mind away from the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel, which are addressed to the heart and the understanding, not the senses."

"Surely every one must allow, nothing can be more effectual in kindling devotional feeling than fine music," said Sir Reginald.

"Undoubtedly," replied Captain Malcolm, "fine music is the very luxury of devotion; but it is one that is far beyond the reach of the mass of the people. Where could our poor Highlanders procure fine music?"

"You forget the bagpipe, and its accompaniment the whisky bottle," said Sir Reginald, sarcastically.

"The fiddle and the *vin du pays* may be more refined modes of enjoyment," said Captain Malcolm; "but refinement of taste does not necessarily imply corresponding improvement in morals. I have not, indeed, lived long enough in a Catholic country to be altogether a fair judge of the practical effects of the Romish religion on

the morals of the people; but of one thing I am very sure, that the *sincere* followers of that religion enjoy much less liberty, spiritual and temporal, than we do. Were we to reckon up the number of holidays, saints' days, fasts, vigils, penances, prayers, &c. &c.—from one year's end to the other, I suspect it would be found that a much larger portion of time is devoted to religious observances amongst Catholics than Protestants. Were we, therefore, to annul, or even curtail, our one day in seven, little or nothing would remain to remind us of the tie subsisting between God and his creatures."

"That is very good," exclaimed Lady Elizabeth. "Penances are, to be sure, shocking things—and we Protestants ought, as Mr Malcolm says, to oppose them by every means in our power—and we ought also to set a good example to the lower orders. I shall go to church myself to-day,"—with an air of dignified virtue—"and if you will allow me, I will take a seat in your carriage," to Captain Malcolm, whom she had just discovered to be a very fine-looking, gentlemanly man; and being a great enthusiast in

beauty, his looks were at once a passport to her good graces.

The offer was, of course, accepted. The first carriage drove off, while the other for Florinda and Edith was getting ready. Edith had been hurt at the slighting way in which Reginald had spoken of the religious observances of their country; for although she herself entered but little into the true spirit of Christianity, she, nevertheless, possessed that reverence for its institutions and symbols, which, with many, passes for religion itself.

When the carriage drove up, Sir Reginald was on the hall-steps ready to hand Lady Waldegrave and Edith in. Madame Latour, being a Catholic, of course did not accompany them.

"I flattered myself you would have escorted Florinda and me to church, Reginald," said Edith, reproachfully.

"You forget that I am half a Catholic," said he, smiling.

Edith gave an unconscious look of affright from him to Madame Latour, who was standing also on the steps. Reginald seemed to read what

was passing in her mind, and the careless, scornful smile he gave in return, at once reassured her; while he added, "That is according to the notions of Presbyterians. But, however, if you are not afraid, after what has passed, to admit such a reprobate within the walls of your kirk, I shall join you there, Edith. I shall take the cut across Benvarloch, and be there as soon as you."

"Is it possible, then, to walk to church?" enquired Lady Waldegrave.

"Quite possible for Highlanders, such as Reginald and I," answered Edith; "but quite impossible, I should imagine, for you, Florinda."

"What a stimulus that word 'impossible' is," said Lady Waldegrave, "especially when one knows it is quite possible, as I am resolved to prove. How I love to overcome possible impossibilities! Come, if I should fag by the way, some of your good Highland fairies will, I am sure, take pity on me, and bring me a pair of golden pattens, or some such aid as will enable me to climb with perfect ease to the very pinnacle of your mountain tops." And, in spite of all remonstrance, her ladyship persisted in walking.

The carriage was, therefore, dismissed empty; and the party set out.

Sir Reginald, as a matter of course, offered an arm to each of his companions; but Lady Waldegrave coldly declined, and he did not repeat the offer. There was something so whimsical and capricious in Florinda's behaviour, that Edith could not fathom it. She had volunteered, even insisted upon taking a long walk with a person from whom she yet would not accept the most common act of civility! What could be the meaning of such mutual, unvarying coldness, and even dislike?

Lady Waldegrave might have read what was passing in Edith's mind, on her artless yet eloquent countenance; but Lady Waldegrave was one of those who are too much engrossed by self to pay much attention to the thoughts and feelings of others, unless when exacting a tribute of admiration or adulation. For a considerable part of the way, the road lay through the beautiful and extensive pleasure-grounds, where ever-changing landscapes of wild Alpine scenery, rocks and woods, knolls and dells, blue lake and

gliding river, alternately mingled with the softer features of culture and ornament—

"The pomp of groves, and garniture of fields,"

presenting a constant succession of grand and lively pictures. But soon, to the rich, picturesque, and ornamented scenery of the home domain, succeeded the purple moor with its grey stones, the dreary glen, the rugged mountain, and the rude torrent. The day was close, and warm, and sunless; an unvarying grey atmosphere surrounded them, and seemed to shed a "browner horror" over the lone valley and the gloomy mountain. There were none of those magical effects of light and shade to enliven the dull bosom of the one, or irradiate the dark brow of the other; and, as has been truly said, sunshine alone fills with beauty the land of mountains, and imparts to every feature a grandeur and a grace, which sinks into insipidity the riches and the beauty of the fairest champaign.

It seemed as if the gloom of nature had communicated itself to the spirits of those who now traversed the solitary scenes, themselves almost

as silent. Lady Waldegrave was pensive and abstracted. Sir Reginald was almost wholly silent, as if absorbed in some strong concentrated feeling. Edith was surprised and mortified at the indifference, and even inattention, with which Florinda regarded the sublime scenery around them. As they climbed the steep side of the mountain, they sometimes stopped to recover breath; and on one occasion, as they looked down from the almost dizzy height on which they stood, to the dreary glen below, Edith, pointing to a wretched and almost imperceptible hovel, with its peat-stack and its potatoe patch, said, " Look there, Florinda,—that is a human dwelling; and, do you know, I am so piqued at the indifference with which you regard our magnificent Benvarloch, that I could almost wish you were a dweller there for a season, that you might learn to look up to it with proper respect and awe. But I daresay the bare idea of such a thing has answered my purpose, and made you tremble already!"

" By no means," replied Lady Waldegrave, calmly; " mournful and isolated as that dwelling

appears, I can conceive circumstances in which it might be the abode of happiness and delight."

"Under what strange circumstances could that possibly be, Florinda?" enquired Edith, smiling at the idea of the delicate, refined, luxurious, fastidious Lady Waldegrave deeming it possible to exist in such a place, under any circumstances. Lady Waldegrave smiled too, but it was with something of scorn, as she answered, in a low voice, but sufficiently loud for Reginald (who stood a little apart) to hear—"Love might transform even that wretched hut into a bower of Paradise."

"And transform the peats and heather into amaranths and roses?" said Edith, laughing.

"Yes—Love has wrought greater miracles than that," replied Florinda, pensively.

"Not *true* love," said Edith, in a low voice, and blushing as she spoke; "there can be no illusion there."

"It is evident you have never loved," returned Lady Waldegrave; "if the love was pure, and fervent, and sincere—if, in short, it *was* love, there would be no illusion in the matter;" and

she repeated, with much grace and beauty, these lines from Garcilazo de la Vega.

> " Por ti el silencio de la selva umbrosa,
> Por ti la esquividad y apartamiento
> Del solitario monte me agradaba."*

She stopped, then said, " What follows is so beautiful, I must repeat it," and with a sigh, she resumed:

> " Por ti la verde hierba el fresco viento
> El blanco lirio, y colorada rosa
> Y dulce primavera descaba.
> Ay ! quanto me engañaba !
> Ay quan differente era
> Y quan de otra manera
> Lo que, en tu falso pecho se escondier !"†

Edith's feelings were so delicate, and her man-

---

* " Through thee, the silence of the shaded glen,
  Through thee, the horror of the lonely mountain,
Pleased me no less than the resort of men,
  The breeze, the summer wood, and lucid fountain.'

† " The purple rose, white lily of the lake,
Were sweet for thy sweet sake !
For thee the fragrant primrose dropt with dew
Was wish'd when first it blew !
Ah, how completely was I in all this
Myself deceiving ! Oh the different part
That thou wert acting,
    The traitor in thy heart !"

ners so simple, that the impassioned, yet sophisticated style of Lady Waldegrave's sentiments, brought forward too so unnecessarily, struck her as something strange, and she thought to herself, "Surely she has never loved, or she could not thus proclaim it!" She stole a glance at Reginald to see whether his feelings accorded with hers, but he had turned abruptly away, as she imagined, in scorn.

After standing a few minutes in silence, Lady Waldegrave said, "I find I must rest before I can proceed. Here is a charming *banc de gazon*," as she seated herself on one of the few green spots the mountain side, covered as it was with rock and heather, afforded.

"We must not rest long, or else we shall be too late for church," said Edith.

"Why, to own the truth," said Lady Waldegrave, languidly, "I fear I must relinquish the attempt of getting to church; I am so fatigued, I feel quite unable to proceed any farther; taunt me as you will, Edith, I am at your mercy."

"I won't be so cruel as to exult over your defeat," said Edith, smiling; "but you must

allow me just to remind you, that I predicted what has come to pass, without even pretending to the second sight. And now, what is to be done?—Come, Reginald, let us hold a council of war."

" I am a bad counsellor," said he, coldly, and without lifting his eyes from the ground.

" Then, if I am to be commander-in-chief, I think the best thing I can do is to dispatch you for my pony, to take Florinda home."

" O no, no, not for the world," cried Florinda: " I should die of fright were I to attempt to descend this dreadful mountain on horseback."

" But my pony is so safe and sure-footed, and besides, Reginald would lead it down the hill for you, as he has often done for me."

" Pray, don't ask me to do any thing so hazardous," said Lady Waldegrave, pettishly.

" Then we must all sit quietly here till you are sufficiently rested to return home," said Edith; " at least my head can suggest no brighter expedient."

" But it makes me quite wretched to think that I should be the means of keeping you from

church. I know you are very desirous of being there; I heard you say so to Mrs Malcolm."

"I should certainly have liked very well to be at church," said Edith; "but the disappointment is nothing; don't think of it."

"But indeed I must. I cannot bear that you should lose any pleasure upon my account; rather than detain you, I will try, if possible, to make it out, *coute qui coute*." And she attempted to rise, but Edith would not allow it, and insisted that she should not stir till perfectly recovered.

"But how shall I manage with mamma?" resumed Lady Waldegrave. "She will be so miserable and so fluttered if I don't appear, that she will make quite a *scène* at church."

"If Lady Waldegrave will honour me with her commands," said Sir Reginald, in a constrained tone of civility, "I shall be happy to be the bearer of them."

"O! that will do," cried Edith. "Reginald will go to church, and account for your absence to Lady Elizabeth; and we can return at our leisure, when you feel disposed to move."

"And leave us here in this frightful solitude,

by ourselves!" exclaimed Florinda. "Surely, Edith, you cannot be serious?"

"I am indeed," said Edith, laughing. "Unless the mountains were to fall upon us, I see no other danger to apprehend. I should not mind being here quite alone."

"O, shocking!" exclaimed Florinda, shuddering; "then what a coward you must think me!"

"Then, what is to be done?" said Edith. "There is no human being near us, to send in either direction."

"I must try to make it out myself, then, it seems," said Florinda, with a languid oppressed air; and then she attempted to rise, but sunk back, as if quite unable; and, in a faint voice, "Indeed, I feel it impossible, without a long rest; and yet I cannot rest, when I think of the state of nervous excitement mamma will be thrown into, when she misses me."

"There is another proposal I would make," said Edith, in a hesitating tone. "But"——

"But what?" enquired Lady Waldegrave.

Edith still hesitated, as she thought of the mutual coldness, and even aversion, her compa-

nions manifested towards each other; then, in a low voice, and with a little confusion, she said, "I would offer to go to church myself, only I thought, perhaps, you would dislike being left with only Reginald."

Lady Waldegrave coloured, and a gleam of pleasure shot from her eyes as she cast them down. "Dear Edith, since you are *so* kind, so *very* kind," said she, pressing her hand with animation, then relapsing into her former languid tone,—"This is no time for ceremony, and I shall not much mind it. To be sure, if it could have been otherwise arranged, it would have been better; but I believe that is the only practicable scheme. Even the presence of an enemy I should feel a protection in this region of horror."

"An enemy, Florinda!—Ah, for shame. You surely do not consider Reginald as such?" asked Edith, in a low voice.

Lady Waldegrave made no reply.

"How I wish I saw you friends—such friends," added Edith, blushing, turning her cheek to whis-

per in Florinda's ear, "—as a sister ought to be with—a brother."

The caress which accompanied this avowal was not returned; but Edith's own confusion rendered her unconscious of Florinda's, and, hastily rising, she called, "Sir Reginald, I am going to walk to church, and Lady Waldegrave trusts herself to your protection—you will see her safe home."

She had expected a remonstrance from her lover as to her undertaking the walk alone—no opposition, however, was made, but an expression of deep emotion crossed his features as he stammered out a few inaudible words of acquiescence. A vague, undefinable sensation passed through Edith's heart—the feeling had neither name nor substance—it was a mere shapeless shadow that fell upon her imagination, and she hastened to dispel it. Yet she lingered, she knew not why, ere she took her departure, perhaps in the hope that Reginald would yet interfere to prevent her. But he did not; he followed her a few steps, as if he would have recalled her;

then turned abruptly round, and leaning against a piece of projecting rock, with his head resting on his arm, remained in deep though silent agitation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

"FLORINDA!" at length he exclaimed, in a voice of emotion; but Lady Waldegrave made no reply.

"Florinda!" he repeated, in a tone of deeper agitation; but still Lady Waldegrave remained immovable.

"Florinda!" he cried, still more passionately, "will you not hear me? answer me?"

For a few moments Lady Waldegrave seemed as if struggling with her feelings, then said, "There was a time when I would have answered, when I *did* answer, to that call from you—that time is past."

"And you now hate—despise me?" cried he. Florinda was silent.

"You think me false—faithless!" he exclaimed, with increasing vehemence; "I know—I know you do."

Lady Waldegrave made no answer, and there was another pause.

"Tell me, only tell me, that you acquit me of cold-blooded perfidy; that you do not think me the base, heartless villain"——his agitation choked his utterance.

"I know not what to think," said Lady Waldegrave, haughtily; "but I feel I degrade myself in thus allowing you an opportunity of uttering such language; nor would I have done so, but that it was necessary, ere I leave this, I should see you alone. You have refused the explanation I sought by Madame Latour, with regard to the picture I committed to your charge; you will not, you dare not as a gentleman, refuse to restore it to me when I demand it myself."

Sir Reginald replied by opening his collar, and discovering the picture suspended round his neck. "Never while I live will I part from it," he cried; "it is my all of happiness!"

"This is too humiliating!" said Florinda,

indignantly, and rising as if to move away; but he seized her hand, and caused her to be seated.

"Wretched and undone as I am," he cried, "hateful as I am to myself, still, to be odious in your eyes, is misery greater than I can bear. O, Florinda, could you but know the struggles of my heart—the sickening mixture of hopelessness and hope!—Could you conceive the thousandth part of the anguish I have endured, that I still endure, and for you!"

A slight wave of the head, and a curl of the lip, indicated Lady Waldegrave's incredulity.

"You do not—you dare not doubt my truth, Florinda!" cried he, starting from the ground, where he had cast himself.

"Have I not cause?"

"No, no; I have deceived myself—I have deceived another—but I have never deceived you. Nay, hear me, Florinda, hear me!"

"To what purpose? We are now mere acquaintances; henceforth let us be still less, let us be strangers."

"Yet you once loved me—at least you suffered me to indulge that hope; but 'tis better that

it should not be so. Tell me, only tell me, that you never loved me; say, then, Florinda, oh, in mercy say, that you love me no longer! that you hate, abhor me!" and he gasped as he spoke; his brow was contracted as in agony, and his eyes seemed as if they would start from their sockets.

A faint blush rose to Lady Waldegrave's cheek as she replied, "You judge of my feelings by your own, it seems. Mine change not so easily."

"Oh, Florinda, dearest, most beloved!" and he pressed her hand to his lips, to his heart, and both were silent for some moments; when, suddenly dropping it, he wildly exclaimed, "Why do you suffer me to touch that hand, Florinda? it never can be mine now—never! Florinda"—and he spoke in a tone of deep, but suppressed agony—"Florinda, I will not conceal it, you are dearer to me than life itself. I never did love, I never can love, another as I love you—to madness, to distraction; and yet—and yet"—and the cold drops hung round his brow—"I am on the eve of marriage with another!"

Uttering an exclamation, Lady Waldegrave

would have risen from her seat, but, starting up, he withheld her.

"Not till you have heard all. Hear me, in mercy hear me, Florinda—by Heaven you shall! —I will not suffer you to believe me a monster of perfidy!"—Then softening—"Florinda, on my knees I implore you to hear me! Erring—guilty as I may be, you shall acquit me at least of premeditated deception. I have acted rashly, wildly, madly, but not basely!"

Lady Waldegrave's only reply was turning her head haughtily away.

"Do you then refuse to hear me?" asked Reginald, in a voice of forced composure.

"To what purpose should I hear you? I have already heard too much—I have heard myself insulted."

"Insulted!—oh, Florinda, you whom I adore, worship"——

"And have *deceived*," interrupted Lady Waldegrave, emphatically.

"Florinda, you must, you *shall* hear me!" cried he firmly, seizing both her hands in his. "You shall hear all, and then condemn me if you

will. A thousand times I have attempted to write to you—to lay open my whole heart to you—to throw myself on your pity—to implore you to fly from me—to forget me—but in vain; where could I find words to express the agonies of my soul! agonies which have made it easier for me to feign hatred than to assume indifference towards you."—He paused, as if to regain composure, but, in a hurried, agitated manner, resumed.

"I need not tell you, that from the first moment I beheld you at Naples, I loved you—*that* you well know. From that time I lived but in your sight—I saw only you—heard only you; for weeks I lived in a dream—a delirium; every thing was forgotten, or, if remembered, remembered only with indifference or disgust. And yet—at that very time, when my whole soul was yours—I confess—with shame and misery unspeakable I confess—my faith was plighted to another!—Bear with me, Florinda, but for a few short minutes, and you shall hear all—It was done in the weakness and ignorance of boyhood. I had mistaken friendship, relationship, affec-

tion, for love—There was my misfortune—my crime, if you will."

"No," cried Florinda, while her cheek glowed with a deeper carnation—"that was not your offence—Had you stopped there—but"——

"To dare to love you—to tell you that I loved you—yes, I allow that was presumption—frenzy—fettered as I was; but at least you will do me the justice to acknowledge that the avowal of my love was forced from me by circumstances—and that even then, when I poured out the feelings of my heart before you, I did not conceal from you that an obstacle then stood in the way of my happiness—I could not bear to name it to you; but it was one I flattered myself I should be able to remove. I trusted that time and absence would have wrought the same change in *her* that had taken place in me, and that the task would be an easy one, to break the ties we so prematurely formed. It has not proved so—she loves me still—still! Ah! do not scorn her affection, Florinda; it is, I am sure, such as she is herself, tender and sincere. But even had it been less so, even were it far otherwise, from the

situation in which I am now placed, to retreat on my part would be infamy. By the death of her brother, I am now unhappily heir to the princely inheritance of her father. All that he has must be mine. I owe him much—He has been a father to me through life. To renounce this alliance would be worse than death to *him*—it would be eternal disgrace to *me!* that is the only price I cannot—*will* not—pay for you. I would have sacrificed myself a thousand times, rather than have met you again as we have now met—and then to part for ever!"

"And she for whom you make this sacrifice accepts it. She values it, perhaps, the more for what it costs?" said Florinda, coldly.

"No—oh no; she is ignorant of all."

"So blind! yet you think she loves you?"

"I am *sure* she does."

Lady Waldegrave moved her head incredulously, and a slight smile of scorn wreathed her lip.

"You doubt, Florinda!" exclaimed Reginald, anxiously regarding her. She was silent.

"Tell me," cried he, still more earnestly,

"have you any reason to believe—to suspect—that Edith"—— He stopped in extreme perturbation.

"Loves you as a brother, a friend, as a companion, a playfellow, a cousin; in all these relations I do believe you *are* loved."

For a moment, whether from vanity or surprise, Sir Reginald looked almost displeased; but in another instant his eyes sparkled with renewed fire.

"If it should be so!" he exclaimed, eagerly. "And yet—and yet—from her own lips I had the avowal—timid and sensitive as she is, she gave me the spontaneous assurance of her love. Ah, Florinda, even she dared to say more than ever you have said!"

"Unjust! ungenerous!" said Lady Waldegrave, crimsoning as she cast her eyes on the ground.

"Florinda, dearest, forgive me! But were it as you suppose, you might yet be mine!" And again he pressed her hand to his lips, and a long silence ensued; each seemed as though they feared to break the spell which blinded their

hearts and senses to the self-delusions, which all unregulated minds, and selfish spirits, so passionately love to indulge.

Suddenly a dark shadow fell upon them, and, looking up, they perceived (with what feelings may be imagined) the huge person of Mr M'-Dow actually bending over them, with outstretched neck, and eyes and mouth open to their utmost extent, Amailye hanging by the bridle on his arm. Sir Reginald's eyes flashed fire, and he cast a glance at the intruder, which, for a moment, caused even his obtuse nature to quail, and he instinctively retreated a few steps, while he said, affecting great delicacy of speech, "I hope I have not been guilty of any intrusion; if I hadn't met Miss Edith, who told me what has happened, I would really have taken this for a courting-scene, hoch, hoch, ho!" Then, losing his bodily fears, he advanced, and seating himself almost close to Lady Waldegrave, he took off his hat, pulled his pocket-handkerchief out of it, and began to wipe his forehead, while Amailye cropped the sweet mountain herbage.

Florinda instantly rose, and with her cheeks

in a glow, said—" I am now sufficiently rested, Sir Reginald, to be able to return;" and with a slight bend of the head to Mr M'Dow, she walked away.

Reginald, conscience-stricken and embarrassed, not daring to offer her his arm, accompanied her in silence. But they had not proceeded many steps before Mr M'Dow was thundering after them, and pushing forward, said, as he extended one of his great elbows, (Amailye hanging on the other,) " Will your ladyship do me the favour to take my arm?"

In an instant Reginald came round from the other side, with looks of lightning, and placing himself between Florinda and the enormous elbow, drew her arm within his, and in a voice of stifled fury, said, " We shall only impede your progress, sir; had you not better mount your horse, and proceed?"

" I thank you, sir," returned the impregnable M'Dow; " but I'm in no particular hurry."

" I beg pardon, sir; but I should have supposed you were," said Sir Reginald, still rising

in his boiling indignation. "It is rather unusual, is it not, for clergymen in this country to be travelling during church service?"

"It is so, certainly," returned Mr M'Dow, with perfect composure; "you are quite right, it is certainly not quite orthodox. But there are circumstances in my case which I think would satisfy even the Presbytery, if the worst should come to the worst, and I should be brought before it at your instance, Sir Reginald—hoch, hoch, ho!—But the fact is, that, although at this moment I can't say I'm in no particular hurry, (as I go but a short distance to-day,) yet I must confess, I'm nevertheless in haste; for since the truth must be told, I'm in no less than wedding haste. My fair lady has done me the honour to fix Wednesday, the twenty-ninth, for the happy day, which is rather sooner than was originally proposed, in consequence of the arrival of Mr Reddie of Manchester, and his family, to the marriage. Mr Reddie is the lady's maternal uncle, and is to officiate as her fawther upon the occasion, so it would be a terrible business if all was *ready* but the bridegroom—hoch,

ho, ho!—I was to have taken the steam-boat to-morrow morning, but hearing last night that the boiler of the Aberdeen boat had burst, and very near killed a passenger, I began to think that they were not very chancy, and that I would be better on the back of my powney than in the boiler of a steam-boat, hoch, hoch, ho! So I just kept incog. at the manse, and slipped away at a time when I thought there was little chance of meeting any body. I merely go as far as my friend Auhnahashnish's this afternoon, and there I'll catch the coach as it passes to-morrow, which will take me to Glasgow the same evening. And now, I hope, you'll allow, Sir Reginald, that this is an extreme case. Only conceive, if any mischance had come over the boat, and I in it, what a dreadful situation for the lady, what an awful predicament for a person of feeling and refinement!"

To this dread anticipation no answer was returned, and the party proceeded; Mr M'Dow expatiating on the advantages and disadvantages of steam-boats, their cheapness and facility, their dangers and disagreeableness, till Sir Reginald

impatiently interrupted him, by saying, "This road, sir, is ill calculated for so many persons; I would recommend you to move forward."

"The road *is* a little narrow to be sure," returned Mr M'Dow, "but I can fall back a step or two, and at the same time enjoy the advantages of the good company I have been so fortunate as to fall in with; besides its rather steep for my beast, who's not just so sure-footed as she has been, and so I prefer walking; not that I'm just so encumbered as the poor Highland post-man, who said he could not get on, because he was sair taigled with a horse!—hoch, ho, ho!" —but the hills only echoed Mr M'Dow's laugh, as he met with no interruption from either of his companions. Sir Reginald was chafing in fiery silence, and Lady Waldegrave's bonnet concealed her face. But, still bent on making himself agreeable, he pushed close up to Lady Waldegrave, again offering his arm. "Your ladyship appears much fatigued, had you not better accept additional help?" A cold and haughty bow was the only answer vouchsafed. Nothing daunted, Mr M'Dow went on—"We

have not here the conveniences that you have in foreign parts," he continued; "I'm told they carry the ladies over the mountains in sedan-chairs, and that puts me in mind of what happened to a countryman of ours, Sir Reginald, when he first went to Edinburgh. He had been invited to a fine party, and he thought he would treat himself with a chair for gentility's sake. But, lo and behold! the chair wanted the bottom; the chairmen were in a hurry, and away they trotted, up one street and down another, the poor gentleman's body in the chair, and his feet racing away through the dirt; quo' he, an 'twerena for the honour o' the thing, 'troth I wad hae preferred plain walking—hoch, hoch, ho!" In this manner Mr M'Dow went on, beguiling, as he thought, the weariness of the way to his companions, whose silence he attributed solely to fatigue.

There was no shaking off the minister. As there was a near cut to Auchnahashnish through Glenroy grounds, he kept in close contact till within a short distance of the Castle, when, with many regrets and apologies at not being able to pay his respects to his worthy pawtron, he made

his parting speech. "Well, Sir Reginald, I hope you'll soon give me an opportunity of doing as I am going to be done by; and no doubt, my lady, I shall have the pleasure of seeing you officiating as best maid on the occasion." Then mounting his Amailye, he rode off.

Intolerable as his presence had been, his absence was scarcely less supportable in the present state of the parties, and his departure was followed by a silence. It was not till they had almost reached the house that Reginald was impelled to break it, when, in an agitated voice and manner, he said, "Florinda, I have still much to say—you must hear me—you must do me justice—I cannot live under the sense of your displeasure—of your contempt," he added, as she withdrew her arm from his, saying, coldly, "Excuse me; I am too much fatigued to resume a subject, which had perhaps better never have been revived."

"I am sick of life!" he exclaimed, passionately. "Do not, then, drive me to desperation! Promise me, at least, that you will again hear me!"

"Perhaps—another time—not now," said Lady Waldegrave, as they entered the house; and she hastily quitted him, aware that she had left him in a state of mind which would not allow him to rest till he was again at her feet.

CHAPTER XIX.

Lady Elizabeth's natural anxieties might possibly have been suppressed at the opera, but were not to be restrained at church. And after having for some time disturbed the devotions of the congregation by her fidgetting and whispering, she at length left the church, accompanied by Edith, who was obliged to order the carriage and return home with her. On arriving there, they learnt that the object of all this solicitude had gone to her own apartment much fatigued, and thither her ladyship repaired, while Edith obeyed a summons to her father. She found the Chief seated in his gouty chair, with no very benign aspect: Benbowie slumbering beside him, and Mrs Macauley fronting them with a serious-looking book in her hand.

" This is a pretty way I'm treated," was his salutation to Edith. " I've sent at least ten times

this last hour for Reginald or you, and it seems it's only now you think it worth while to come! I don't believe there's one of my own hounds that's neglected in the manner I am. Where's your cousin? Where's Reginald? I ask, where is he?" Edith (who had seen her father just before going to church) hastened to explain matters, but the explanation was received with high disdain.

"You've been all very ill employed in wandering after preachers, and leaving me here with no other company than these two creatures," pointing to Benbowie and Mrs Macauley; "the one squirting tobacco in my face all day, the other deaving me with her impertinent trash of sermons."

"O now, Glenroy! how can you speak that way, when you know the only sermon I've read to you to-day is that beautiful discourse on meekness by" ——

"And what the plague have I to do with discourses on meekness?" stamping with his crutch as he spoke.

"That's true—very true, on my conscience," said Benbowie, roused by the stroke of the crutch.

"Meekness!" rejoined Glenroy; "hah, a pretty like thing, to be sure, for a Highland Chief; he would cut a pretty figure with meekness indeed! Meekness — meekness?—meanness!"

"Ah, Glenroy, for all that, I wish I saw you clothed in meekness!" sighed Mrs Macauley.

"Clothed in meekness! pretty like clothing indeed for a Highland Chief!" cried Glenroy, furiously.

"'Deed then, Glenroy, I'm thinking, after all, Highland Chiefs are but human craaturs," said Mrs Macauley, looking as if the idea had for the first time entered her mind.

"You really—there's no bearing this! I desire, Molly Macauley, you'll take that methodistical-looking book out of my sight this moment, and never let me see or hear of it again. These puritanical books are enough to drive a man out of his senses. I hate meekness! by Jove, if I had not the patience of Job, I would not submit to this! Benbowie, ring the bell—ring it louder. It's very hard that I can't get a word of my own nephew in my own house."

Benbowie, now roused from his slumber, fol-

lowed Mrs Macauley and her volume of sermons out of the room, as Reginald entered. Edith was struck with the paleness and dejection of his countenance, on which the recent traces of agitation were still visible; and a wild, nameless fear again darted through her mind.

"Come away, Reginald," cried Glenroy, extending his hand to him, "come away, it's long since I've seen you; but, I know, it's not your fault, it's these foolish women that take you up—but you should not mind them, Reginald. And when's that English set going away, Edith—what's keeping them here all this time? If they expect to see any more of me, they're much mistaken, I can tell them. My foot shall not cross my own room door till I've seen their backs turned; but let them go or stay, don't you trouble your head about them, Reginald. I see you're quite done out, dancing attendance on them; but I must put a stop to that, and the best way to do it is, to get you married to Edith, and then you can give all your time and attention to me. Where are you going, Edith? come back this moment—going away at the very time I'm settling your marriage, you silly thing!"

Edith, with her face in a glow, stopped irresolute; but, in her confusion, saw not the increasing paleness and look of agony, which stole over Reginald's features.

"You know I'm to have the woods thinned for her portion, and I'll ride there some day with you myself, Reginald, and you shall have out the black mare. It was a good one that Lord what-do-you-call-him, having the impudence to ask me to part with that mare. Norman's mare! he would have had Edith too; but I never would give her to any man living but yourself, Reginald. But this is the 25th of the month —is it not? Well, let it be in the course of the next month, and that gives time enough to get all her trumpery, and to invite the county to it. The sooner the better—and then, Reginald, we'll part no more,"—with a fervent shake of the hand. Much more of the same sort followed, while Sir Reginald, with a sick and an aching heart, articulated some indistinct words, which, however, passed very well with Glenroy. At length he was liberated by the sound of the dressing bell.

Late and tardily the party assembled in the drawing-room. Edith naturally shunned the possibility of a tête-à-tête with her lover, after what had passed in her hearing about the marriage ; and he, as may be supposed, was not more desirous of meeting with one, the very sight of whom spoke daggers to his conscience.

Dinner had been announced some time before Lady Elizabeth made her appearance, which she at last did in her morning dress, and with visible marks of business and bustle in her deportment.

"Excuse me, my dear child," said she to Edith, "for coming to dinner *en déshabillé ;* but since I saw you, I have been so hurried I really scarcely know what I am about. Florinda—(who, by the by, begs that you will excuse her appearing at dinner, as she still feels rather *abattu*, from the wretched walk she had ; but Dr Price assures me a little rest is all that is necessary,) has had an express from the Duchess of Porchester, who it seems is come with the Duke to his shooting-box, entreating us to go to her immediately. Florinda begged I would show her note to you, that you may see how

impossible it is to refuse. There are no secrets in it; I shall read it aloud:

" 'My dear Lady Waldegrave,

" 'I have this instant learnt you are at Glenroy, consequently not more than thirty-six miles from us, which, according to Highland geography, is about the same distance as between Piccadilly and St James's. Judge, then, of my impatience to have you here. Do oblige me, and come *immediately*; I have a very *particular* reason for wishing you to be here before the 27th. I cannot express how much you will gratify me by coming. We have a perfect host of your adorers here, and now that they are tired of shooting grouse, I fear they will take to shooting themselves, unless you come to us; and then, perhaps, they will only shoot one another. I *know* you will come, dearest dear Lady Waldegrave, and oblige your affectionate friend,

" 'Charlotte Porchester.

" 'As horses are not quite so plenty as heather in this *charming* country, the Duke begs me to say he will send his to meet you at the (I can't

spell the word) ferry opposite Glenroy, wind and weather serving, to-morrow, as they surely will, to oblige *you* and *me*, and half a dozen dying swains and desperate inamoratas. This will save you about a thousand miles, more or less. Of course when I say *you*, I include Lady Elizabeth and Madame Latour, and all near and dear to you. I enclose a billet to Sir Reginald, although I suppose, if report speaks truth, I need scarcely hope he will leave his *fiancée*—but why should not she come too? Tell Miss Malcolm this, with all sorts of proper speeches on the occasion.' "

" Ah ha, Sir Reginald! thereby hangs a tale which we must have some day," cried Lady Elizabeth, forgetting, in the exhilaration of her spirits, all previous antipathies felt and expressed. " That's just as it should be," glancing from him to Edith; " but I understand," nodding her head, " I shall keep your secret, though you scarcely deserve it, for having kept it so well yourselves, ha, ha, ha!—But in the meantime, it is very sad,' addressing Edith with an air of childish delight quite at variance with her words, " to be obliged to leave you so soon, when we were all so happy

and comfortable; but those things are unavoidable. Florinda really never has been in spirits since we came here, and my own health suffered a good deal. In short, I think we shall all be the better of a change. At the same time, I think I did right in coming here. I feel more comfortable at having seen poor Glenroy, and I flatter myself I have done him a little good. I said all I could to raise his spirits, poor man, and I think I succeeded; and, *apropos*, I believe I must endeavour to see him again before I go, just to bid him good bye. We must hope, however, to meet in town by and by. I think I have half persuaded Glenroy to bring you there next winter; indeed I am sure he will; but perhaps you will go with us to Kinmore—why should not you, my dear? You will be much the better of a little gaiety—you are too much moped here.—*Apropos*, Sir Reginald, I hope Florinda sent you the note that came enclosed for you from the Duchess?"

Sir Reginald merely bent his head in acknowledgment, as he advanced, and offered his arm to conduct her ladyship to dinner, while she continued chattering all the way along.

They were seated before Madame Latour joined them, and when she did, her spirits seemed no less excited than Lady Elizabeth's, at the prospect of exchanging Glenroy for Kinmore; and both were so talkative during dinner, that the silence of the rest of the company was as much a matter of necessity as of choice. Lady Elizabeth talked of the anticipated pleasures of Kinmore, of the charming Duchess, and her brother, Lord Errington, who was dying for love of Florinda, and for whom she thought Florinda had a sort of a *nuance* of preference; and she appealed to Sir Reginald, who sat pale and frowning, as if scarcely able to endure the nonsense she uttered.

"I'm sure, Miss Edith, you may be thankful you are not a great heiress," said the simple-minded Mrs Macauley; "for *you* may be sure you will be married for true love, and for nothing else."

"O! unquestionably," cried Lady Elizabeth; "my daughter's rank and fortune, together with her beauty and talents, render her, beyond comparison, the most *recherché* person in the world. She will be sadly teazed, poor love! amongst

such a crowd of adorers, as the Duchess calls them." Sir Reginald here rose and rang the bell violently; then, when the summons was answered, seemed at a loss what to ask for. Edith gazed on him with surprise and fear, and again a strange wild suspicion flashed upon her as she encountered the malignant smile of Madame Latour. "And now let us arrange something about our journey to-morrow. We must start early—by twelve, if possible. That won't be too early for me, Dr Price? You will arrange every thing for me, as usual, you know. And, Sir Reginald, I hope we shall have your company; or, if you would prefer it, perhaps Florinda will give you a seat in her carriage; Don't you think so, Madame Latour?"

But Sir Reginald had caught Edith's eye fixed upon him with an expression of the most intense anxiety; and before Madame Latour could reply, he made a strong effort at regaining his composure; and, with the tone and manner of suppressed agitation, he hastily said,—"I regret I cannot have that honour, I am otherwise engaged." And as he spoke, he became very pale.

" Ah, engaged !" cried her ladyship, who, when in good humour, was always in high spirits. " That is a very significant word, and we must find out the meaning of it. Come, my dear," taking Edith's arm, " you can perhaps tell me the nature of Sir Reginald's engagement ?— What a very pretty blush," she whispered, as they were leaving the room. " Madame Latour, don't you think Edith blushes uncommonly well ?"

" Mais oui," replied Madame Latour ; " je voudrois que Miss Malcomb, put donner un peu de ses belles couleurs au pauvre Sir Reginaal, il est si pale ! Il a l'air, vat you call unâpee."

" By the by, now that you mention it, I think he does look a little paler and thinner, and more grave than he used to do," said Lady Elizabeth ; " but I have observed that some men do look rather grave when they are going to be married."

" Sir Reginaal marrie !" exclaimed Madame Latour, in real or affected astonishment,—" c'est ne pas possible ! Il me semble mourant—mourant de chagrin—de desespoir—de——non—non ! je ne le crois pas, Meess Malcomb ; assure-

ment ce n'est pas vrai—vous ne le croyez pas ?" And Madame Latour fixed her eyes on Edith, who, trembling as she was with emotion, despised her too much to betray it.

"Come, come," cried Lady Elizabeth, "we have said quite enough on that subject;" then putting her arm within Edith's, and drawing her a little aside—"Yes, 'tis as I hinted before, she certainly had a design in that quarter—how very absurd, poor woman, that she cannot conceal her disappointment !—How any one can admire her eyes ! and do you observe how frightfully her head is dressed to-day ? And now, my dear, come to my dressing-room, and let me hear all about this marriage of yours, that you have kept such a profound secret."

On entering the dressing-room, such a tumultuous greeting took place between the dogs and their mistress, that Edith was spared the embarrassment of a reply.

"We shall be quiet here," continued Lady Elizabeth, throwing herself into a *chaise longue*, while the dogs continued to bark and cough out their welcome, "quiet is absolutely neces-

sary to me in my delicate state of health. You will find a seat somewhere, my dear," casting her eyes around on the various chairs, which were covered with dresses, hats, and caps. "Rosalie," she called to her maid in the inner apartment, "Otez ces bèrets et ce manteau, et avancez une chaise, pour mademoiselle.—Now, my dear, never mind her, she don't understand a word of English; but apropos, (ring the bell first, I must speak to Rousseau, about putting new strings to my guitar before we go,) well, and so you were telling me—I forget how it was you and Sir Reginald first became acquainted—is not that a knock at the door? How tiresome! See who it is, my dear.—Oh! Dr Price, is that you—come in—I must beg you will see the housekeeper yourself about the refreshments we shall require in the carriage; you know how little I eat, but I find variety absolutely necessary for me; in fact, my dear, the stomach requires to be amused as well as the mind," turning to Edith, "and that is a secret worth knowing." But the secret was lost on Edith, who had taken the opportunity of Doctor Price's entrance, to make her exit.

CHAPTER XX.

Without a general knowledge of human nature, the particular study of an individual is of little use in enabling us to draw accurate conclusions as to the effect events may produce on the mind; for, as some one has truly said, there is nothing so inconsistent as consistency. Edith thought she knew her father sufficiently, to be certain he would rejoice at hearing of the approaching departure of his lady, and she therefore hastened to his apartment to communicate the pleasing intelligence; but, to her utter surprise, it was received with every symptom of dissatisfaction and displeasure.

"Going away to-morrow!" he repeated, at least half-a-dozen times; "that is the most extraordinary thing I ever met with in the whole

course of my life! I can scarcely say I have seen her, the mother, yet; and the other one, the daughter, I've never once set eyes upon; and I don't so much as know yet what brought them here at all—What's taking them away in such a hurry? The duchess of nonsense! what do I care for the Duchess of Porchester?—they did not come here to visit her, but to see me; and it's quite inconceivable to me what's taking them away. I can't make it out, there's something I don't understand in it—there's something not right—there's something quite wrong! They must have been ill used since they came to the house, or they would not be leaving it so soon. How has that simpleton, Molly Macauley, been behaving herself? that creature really has not the sense of a sparrow—to go away, too, at the very time of your marriage.—Ring the bell—I shall have this cleared up—they shall not leave this house till I know the reason of such behaviour.—What's keeping that fellow, Duncan? ring again. I want him to help me to dress, for I'm coming to the drawing-room—I must know the meaning of this—So go away now, and don't

let me hear any of your nonsense—I *shall* go," stamping his crutch, "if I should go on the crown of my head."

And Edith, knowing how vain expostulation was, withdrew, trembling at the thoughts of another scene between the Chief and his lady, and anticipating an abrupt disclosure of her approaching marriage. She next sought Florinda; but she was denied admittance to her, on the plea of her ladyship's headach being so bad she was unable to see any one, save Madame Latour, who was, as usual, closeted with her. She then repaired to Lady Elizabeth, to acquaint her with what had passed with her father, and to try, if possible, to prevail upon her to gratify him, if he should be very pressing with them to remain a little longer at Glenroy. But her ladyship was busy directing and superintending the movements of her attendants, in packing the variety of litter which still lay scattered around, such as dresses, jewels, music, writing and drawing implements, French novels, drugs, &c. &c. She therefore scarcely listened to her, and only

answered the invitation—she gave in her father's name for a longer stay, by a quick and peremptory refusal, or a slight acquiescence as to meeting him in the drawing-room. Vexed and perplexed, poor Edith knew not where to turn—there was no one near to whom she could speak of the untoward aspect of affairs, still less to whom she could apply for advice and assistance. To Reginald, who had once used to be her confidante and counsellor, she now felt an unaccountable reluctance to have recourse; an invisible but impassable barrier seemed to have been raised between them—but by whom she could not tell; it was something she felt, but could neither describe nor comprehend. Such was the tenor of her thoughts as she sat alone in the drawing-room, her head resting on her hand, and the tears unconsciously dropping from her eyes, when the door opened, and the object of her meditations entered, with an air of dejection and gloom. He gazed on her for some moments, but said nothing. Edith could not speak, but her tears fell faster. Reginald sighed, but it was a sigh that breathed more of discontent and displeasure

than of sympathy or sorrow. He remained for some time as if struggling with his emotion; then, in an agitated voice, he said, "Edith, you appear to be unhappy?"

Edith struggled against her feelings, and with a melancholy smile replied, "Only sorrowful."

"And why sorrowful?" demanded Sir Reginald. "After what has passed, I did not expect—I flattered myself—I—if there is any cause"——

Edith sighed, and, in spite of her efforts to restrain them, tears continued to drop from her eyes.

"For Heaven's sake, Edith, tell me, I conjure you, as you value my peace, as you value your own—tell me the cause of your tears, of your sorrow?"

"I cannot tell," said Edith, with emotion; "I scarcely know myself; but strange, vague, undefined, but very painful feelings, take possession of me."

"You did not use to be fanciful or vapourish," said Reginald, looking earnestly at her.

"Nor am I now," said Edith, more firmly;

"but—" she stopped, and her voice quivered, "we speak a strange language to each other now; Reginald—it was not thus we were wont to talk in former times."

"And whose fault is that, Edith?" he asked abruptly, as he stooped to caress his dog to hide his confusion.

"Not mine," replied she faintly.

Sir Reginald raised his head, but his eyes were still fixed on his dog, while he said in a quick, hurried manner, "Yet, after what passed to-day, a few hours ago, in your father's presence, it seems somewhat strange that I should find you thus apparently wretched."

"Ah, Reginald! you did not use to speak thus hardly to me," said Edith reproachfully, as she strove to dispel her tears.

"I did not use to see you look as if you were going to be sacrificed," he replied, with increasing harshness of manner.

"You *know* it is not so," said Edith, tenderly, and she blushed as she said it.

Reginald made no reply. Edith gathered courage, and went on—"But were I to judge

thus of you, what might I not think? what ought I not to think?"

Reginald's colour rose, and for a few seconds he seemed as if at a loss how to reply; he then said, "Of course, I might have expected that accusation would be answered by recrimination; had I complained of your spirits being too high, you would to a certainty have replied, that 'twas because mine were so boisterous; 'tis the way, not with all, but with a great part of your sex, Edith."

Edith's heart swelled at this taunt, but she made an effort to repress her feelings, and with tolerable calmness said, "If I am the foolish, unreasonable creature you represent me to be, you cannot wish"—her voice failed her, but she added, in a faltering accent, "We had better part."

This was the very point to which her faithless lover had, unconsciously to himself, been aiming to bring her, that the odium of the quarrel might rest upon her; but though blinded by selfish passion, he was not so lost to every generous feeling as not to be smote with a sense of his own injustice and cruelty. Passion and conscience

struggled in his breast, and, averse to yield entirely to either, he sought to compromise between them.

"Edith," he said with emotion, "your happiness is dear to me as my own; if it is to be attained by my relinquishing my right to your affections—Edith, is it so?—Speak to me, I implore you." And he grasped her hand, and gazed intensely on her face, on which deep blushes and deathly paleness alternately succeeded each other.

"Tell me," cried Reginald, with increasing vehemence, "what it is you wish—what you would have me do? and you shall be gratified, even at the expense of my own happiness; more I cannot say." And he dropt the hand he held.

"I have no wish, Reginald," said Edith, faintly, "but to see you such as you were in former happy days."

"That can never be," interrupted he, impatiently. "I have told you I am changed. I have known suffering, and anguish—and——I can never be as I have been. If that is a crime in your eyes, then I *am* most culpable."

"No, Reginald, you wrong me," cried Edith,

in tender emotion. "Perhaps I wrong you; yet strange doubts will arise in spite of all—misgivings of—I know not what, Reginald; I would fain tell you what I sometimes think—what I fear—but the dread of hurting you"——

She stopped in extreme agitation, without daring to raise her eyes to Reginald, who remained silent, and evidently not less embarrassed than herself. The wished-for, yet dreaded eclaircissement seemed now on the point of taking place, and he feared alike to aid or impede it. Edith alone should be the destroyer of her own happiness. She might wrest from him the secret of his heart; she might tear aside the veil in which he had sought to shroud the image he adored; she might rush into the sanctuary of his inmost thoughts, after he had warned her that there was a point at which she must stop. But never—no, never—should his lips breathe that name to her. Never should his be the hand to rend away her delusion. Where, then, was the injustice he should be guilty of? Who, then, could dare to say he had wronged her?—Such was the sophistry with which the slave of passion strove to silence

the small still voice of conscience, while he hung in agonising suspense on the word that should next issue from Edith's lips, as that which was to seal both their dooms; but the stroke was yet averted. Both were roused from this state of mute, but high-wrought feeling, by the bustle which invariably attended Glenroy's approach, and presently the Chief entered, leaning on his servant, and shuffling along with great difficulty, attended by Mrs Macauley and Benbowie. In the agitation of her spirits, Edith felt unable to stand the scrutiny even of such common observers as these, and she was hastily retreating, when recalled, in an authoritative voice, by Glenroy, who never could bear to see any body leave the room while he was in it.

"What's the meaning of this?" cried he in his loudest key; "going out of the room just at the moment I'm coming into it? Is that a proper behaviour? I really think you ought to be ashamed of yourself, Edith. Is that the way you welcome your old father to the use of his feet?"

"O, papa!" said Edith, taking his hand, "how can you doubt"——

"How can I doubt? What am I to doubt?" interrupted Glenroy, peevishly. "I'm for none of your doubts—I hate doubts. I desire I may never see or hear of doubts, for I despise them. *I* never doubt—I never did doubt—and never will doubt, for I hate all doubtful characters. So come you here, Reginald, and sit by me, for I know there's nothing doubtful about you—all's open and above-board with you.—Now, Mrs Macauley, I desire you to hold your tongue for the rest of this evening; haven't I been deaved with it the whole of this day, and do you think I'm going to submit to be preached to by you any longer? I'll do no such thing," stamping his stick.

"Well but, Glenroy, as sure as death I'm not speaking."

"Not speaking! you never give over speaking—your tongue never lies! but I'm for no speaking at present; so hold your tongue, and order the coffee, and go and see what's keeping Lady Elizabeth and the rest of them—I'm waiting for them—I don't understand it. I must know what's the meaning of this; for I'll not

suffer either my own character, or the character of my house, to be aspersed—however, I shall have it all cleared up before this night is over, and unless they choose to stay to your marriage"——

"I beg—I—I entreat, Glenroy—I," stammered Reginald, violently agitated.

"Ay, ay, I understand what you would say," interrupted Glenroy, "and you shall have every thing your own way, Reginald; you know you're as much master here as I am, and more too, for I'm grown a perfect cipher in my own house now—I've no more authority than if it didn't belong to me. But there's one thing I'm determined upon, and that is, that there shall be no more of this shilly-shallying by these silly women, but that you shall have your own way, Reginald, and be married before you're a month older, so don't say another word about it—there has been a great deal too much talking already. I never knew any good come of talking—I dare say it's just that creature Molly Macauley's long tongue that has put every thing wrong—she really ought to have her mouth stitched up!"

CHAPTER XXI.

Meanwhile Mrs Macauley, anxious to do her part, was labouring away to keep the peace between Glenroy and his lady. As the first object in her life was the favour of the Chief, so she could not conceive that it was a thing to be lightly esteemed by any body else, much less by his own wedded wife. She therefore gladly availed herself of the errand she had been dispatched upon, to apprize Lady Elizabeth, at the same time, how greatly Glenroy was distressed at the thoughts of her departure. A piece of information which she had no doubt would at once annihilate the whole scheme, and settle her at Glenroy for as long a time as it should be her lord's pleasure that she should remain. But all Mrs Macauley's eloquence failed in producing any effect on her ladyship's feelings.

"Oh, my lady!" said she, "you must not

speak to Glenroy of going away, for 'deed he's so hospitable, and so used to be humoured, and to get every thing his own way, (and that's no more than what he ought to get,) that if he's crossed by your ladyship, he'll be neither to hold nor to bind, good man that he is!"

"You don't mean to say, I am in the power of a madman, and that I can't get away?" said her ladyship, in some alarm.

"Oh no! no at all; there will nothing happen to you, if you'll just be so good as let Glenroy take his own way, and be discreet to him—and if he shall say, black's white, if your ladyship would just please to say the same—and then, may be if you would be so good as to offer to stay to please him, he would then be ready to let you go."

"It is excessively troublesome," said her ladyship; "really quite childish in Glenroy."

"'Deed, and it's a very odd fancy that's come on him," said the simple Mrs Macauley; "and may be he is now and then just a little of what you would call not just so clever and sensible as he used to be; but then, you know, that makes

it all the easier for your ladyship to agree with him."

"Certainly," said her ladyship, "when a man is fairly in his dotage, he must be treated like a child; and I shall make a point of seeing him, and doing all I possibly can to soothe and gratify him, without giving way to his whims." And with this laudable purpose in view, her ladyship at length descended to the drawing-room.

But in the interval, Glenroy had got a new light on the subject; for Reginald, upon being made acquainted with the cause of his disturbance, had given a decided opinion in favour of the ladies being allowed to take their departure; and the point was settled by his saying—and he tried to say it coolly and steadily—that if they remained, he should take the opportunity of Glenroy having such agreeable company with him, to pass a few days at Dunshiera.

"Well, then, let them go," cried the Chief, and at that moment his lady entered, fully prepared to be pressed to stay. They met with mutual embarrassment, for the fear of losing Reginald by any indiscreet word, restrained Glenroy from what he called speaking his mind;

and his lady, somewhat intimidated by Mrs Macauley's representations, was no less guarded on her part. The salutations were therefore very well performed on both sides; and there was even considerable politeness evinced in the passing but guarded remarks that were made by each. Glenroy enquired after Lady Waldegrave, and received in reply a very rational and moderate apology for her non-appearance, on the plea of being over fatigued by going to church—an excuse admirably adapted to conciliate the Chief's favour.

"But I hope, now you are so much recovered, Glenroy, I shall have an opportunity of presenting my daughter to you some day very soon," said her ladyship, bent on conciliating him at the *trifling* expense of truth; nothing in reality being farther from her wishes and intentions than that any such opportunity should be afforded.

"Why I thought—didn't somebody tell me you were going to leave us?" said Glenroy, with some embarrassment.

"Why, we *were* talking about it," replied the lady, with the ease of one accustomed to tell

white lies; "but since you are unwilling to part with us"——

"Oh no! not at all," interrupted Glenroy, confusedly; "that's to say, I think people should always take their own way. I never interfere with any body's plans—never. I let every body do as they like."

"On my conscience, I never knew that before!" said Benbowie, with a look of stupified amazement; "but it's very true—very true."

"You are very kind, Glenroy," said his lady; "you know, the only plan I had in view by coming here was to have the pleasure of seeing you, and spending some time with you; and I assure you, this visit has been a very great gratification to me. I am quite charmed to see you look so well, and to find you so comfortable."

"You've seen much of my looks and comfort, or else not," muttered Glenroy, the pent-up storm ready to take any direction.

"Not so much, to be sure, as I could have wished," said the lady, in a tender tone; "but quite enough to satisfy me that you are well and happy, Glenroy."

"Well and happy!" repeated the Chief, indignantly, "do you tell me I am well, when I can hardly put my foot to the ground with gout? —and happy, when I've lost the finest young man that ever was born? Well and happy!—well and happy, to be sure!"

"Ah, to be sure, these are things that can't be helped, Glenroy, and so we must bear them as well as we can! But you have a charming house; this is a noble apartment, and I do assure you I have been very comfortable, and I think my appetite, upon the whole, has improved while I have been here. Dr Price thinks so too."

"I know nothing about Dr Price; I don't desire to know any thing about any of your doctors; I know *I* have no appetite—*my* appetite's completely gone!"

"Ah! but it will return again, Glenroy. You ought to amuse your stomach; in fact, the stomach requires to be amused as well as the mind. I hope you will enjoy your own good dinners as much as some of your guests have done. I do assure you, you keep an excellent table."

"To be sure I do," said Glenroy, scornfully.

"The soups and fish are excellent, which is not always the case in Scotland," continued the lady.

"Every thing is excellent at my table," said the Chief, proudly.

"Excuse me there, Glenroy, I cannot go quite so far; for to own the truth, I do not think the *vol au vents* at all the thing."

"*Vol au vents!*" exclaimed Glenroy; "do you think I trouble my head about such trash?"

"Excuse me," said her ladyship, with an air of offended dignity, "but I consider every thing relating to a table as of consequence, and *vol au vents* are by no means so insignificant as"——

"They're so insignificant that I don't care if the whole race were swept into the sea. *Vol au vents!*—Let me hear no more of such trumpery on my table, Edith, remember that; I'm for none of your beggarly French, or your pock-pudding English dishes, made of nobody knows what. *Vol au vents!* the very scum of the earth!"

"O, my lady, if you please, you must just humour him," whispered Mrs Macauley; and her ladyship contented herself with a shrug of her shoulders, and a look of contempt.

Madame Latour here entered the room, and was presented to Glenroy by his lady; and no sooner was that introduction over than Dr Price made his appearance, and the same ceremony had to be performed with him. This gave time for Glenroy's blaze to go down; and scarcely were the ordinary salutations over, when, forgetting the restraint laid upon him, he turned to his lady, and said—" If you choose to stay a little longer, I shall show you what a true Highland feast is, on their wedding-day," pointing to Reginald and Edith; " of course you all know that my nephew and successor, Sir Reginald, is to be married to my daughter Edith immediately."

" Ah! so I have just discovered," cried her ladyship, gaily.

" Just discovered!" repeated Glenroy, contemptuously; " where were your eyes that you did not see it long ago?—But, Edith, what's the meaning of this? and why have you been making a mystery of your marriage? It's most extraordinary—I don't understand it, for my part—a marriage that you've both reason to be proud of!"

Edith's confusion was too great to allow her to notice the anguish depicted on Reginald's features, as the piercing gaze of Madame Latour was fixed upon him.

" A very suitable match," said Lady Elizabeth ; " very suitable indeed ; but, I think, Florinda will be a good deal surprised—Don't you think so, Madame Latour ?"

With marked emphasis, Madame Latour replied, " Vraiment oui !"

" Surprised !" repeated Glenroy ; " what is there to surprise any body in that ? I think it would have been very extraordinary if it had been any thing else. Surprised—hem ! they must be easily surprised !"

" Why, you must own, Glenroy, it is surprising the secret should have been so well kept, that none of us suspected it before to-day."

" Not suspect what's been known to every man, woman, and child about the place for these ten years at least ? They've been sweethearts ever since they were the height of that table. Wasn't it on that account she refused that English lord—what do you call him ? with his thirty

thousand a-year, and that wanted *his* black mare? How long is it since your courtship began, Reginald?—The very first day, I believe, that Edith and you were brought together, was it not?"

"No, no, Glenroy," said his lady, attempting to be facetious; "you forget that Florinda was his first love—Was it not so, Sir Reginald? But she was coy, or cruel, or—how was it?"

Reginald attempted to laugh, but it was a ghastly smile.

"Well," resumed the lady, "we shall not talk of these things. I am sure Florinda will be delighted when she hears of what is to happen. Edith and I had a long confab in my dressing-room on the subject, and now I am quite *au fait* of the whole business; but it's a pity we had not known it sooner—we might have managed to have been present at the celebration—possibly Florinda might even have officiated as bride's-maid; but it is too late now."

"What's too late?" demanded Glenroy.

"Oh! nothing, nothing, papa," cried Edith, hastily.

"What makes it too late?" said the Chief,

addressing his lady; "it's the most sensible proposal I ever heard you make,—just stay where you are till the marriage is over, and it will be a fine ploy for your daughter; she may never have another opportunity of seeing a Highland wedding again, unless she can get a Highlandman for herself; but she must let herself be seen if she expects to get a husband in this country."

Lady Elizabeth trembled with indignation, and a little hysterical laugh rattled in her throat as she repeated, "Lady Waldegrave *expect* to get a husband in the wilds of Scotland—he, he, he!"

"And why not?" demanded Glenroy.

"Good heavens, Glenroy! how can you talk so? she who has the very flower of England at her feet!"

"Flowers of England! bah!—pretty like flowers, or else not—trash—weeds—that a Highland Chief would tramp below his feet." And Glenroy stamped with his stick, thus fitting as far as he could the action to the word.

"It is time—more than time, we were gone," said the lady, rising with an air of outraged dignity.

"Reginald, Edith," cried Glenroy, no less

incensed, and throwing off all restraint, "hold both of your tongues!—I'm fit to speak for myself, and I *will* say this is the most extraordinary behaviour ever I met with in the course of my life! I wish to know the meaning of it? I wish to know what people mean by coming to my house, and then leaving it as if they weren't pleased with the treatment they had met with; if there has been any offence given or taken, I can only say I am ignorant of it. It has not been with my knowledge, and I desire to know what brought you here, and what's taking you away?"

"I have only to request, Glenroy," said his lady, still vibrating with anger, "that when you speak of Lady Waldegrave, it may be in more respectful terms than those you have just used."

"Respectful terms!" thundered Glenroy; "I'll speak of nobody in respectful terms! respectful terms! I don't know the meaning of the phrase! I respect no man nor woman either, if she was lady fifty times over. It's very likely that I should respect *your* daughter, when I never did, and never will respect my own,

though she's going to be the wife of the man on earth that's the most entitled to respect! But I suppose you're disappointed that you've not got him for your daughter. I suspect that's what's taking you away in such a hurry—it looks very like it."

"This is not to be endured!" cried Reginald, starting up; "allow me, Lady Elizabeth, to protect you from further insult." And taking her arm within his, he led her from the room, his cheek flushed, and his whole air and deportment expressive of the utmost agitation. At sight of this manifestation of Reginald's displeasure, Glenroy was instantly subdued, and Edith was dispatched to try to bring them back; but Lady Elizabeth had retired to her own apartment, and refused to listen to any overtures of peace or reconciliation. Florinda and her friend remained invisible, and Reginald was no where to be found. Finding all her efforts to reunite the jarring elements of the party were vain, Edith at last sought the privacy of her chamber, to ponder over the events of the day, which weighed heavily on her spirits.

CHAPTER XXII.

The following morning all was bustle and preparation, and nothing was to be seen but booted lacqueys and bonneted Abigails hurrying to and fro, their hands and arms filled with the thousand forget-me-nots pertaining to travellers of distinction. Lady Elizabeth (like many wiser people) had a great dislike to ferries, and at another time would have been almost frantic at the thought of venturing so precious an argosy as the heiress of Waldegrave even on the smooth surface of a summer sea, for half an hour; and indeed she did at first vow and protest she never would hear of such a thing. However, she at length yielded, upon finding there was no other way in which the journey could be accomplished so rapidly, as even Glenroy's stables could not furnish the requisite number of horses, and there was no time to procure them from the nearest post-house.

To allay her maternal solicitude, she made Reginald and Edith severally promise that they would accompany Florinda across the ferry, she herself travelling to that point by land, where they were to meet, and proceed together to their destination. In the hurry and bustle of preparation, her ladyship appeared to have forgot the fracas of the preceding evening, and it seemed to have had rather a salutary effect on Glenroy, as he declared to Mrs Macauley, while she poured out his coffee for him, that he felt better than he had done for a long time, and that, if once the house were rid of them, he should be quite well. Lady Waldegrave did not appear at breakfast, and Edith in vain sought to find her alone, for the purpose of explaining to her, as far as she could, the situation in which she stood with Sir Reginald. After what had passed—after she had been thus publicly proclaimed by her father, as on the eve of her marriage—she thought she owed it to herself to say a few words to her on the subject, before they parted, perhaps for ever. It was also possible, too—but her heart trembled at the sug-

gestion—that in so doing, she might discover whether there was any ground for the vague, nameless, shapeless fears which haunted her imagination. But Lady Waldegrave seemed carefully to shun all approaches to confidence, by taking care to keep either Madame Latour, or her maid, in constant attendance upon her, to the very moment of her departure. Edith thought—but it might be fancy—that she looked disconcerted when she declared her intention of accompanying her across the ferry; but before there was time for any thing to be said, she was suddenly called away by an imperative message from Glenroy. Upon hastening to him, she found the whole of his anxiety was to know when these people were going away, that he might have a quiet house, and that Reginald and she might be at leisure to make out their marriage. As soon as she could extricate herself from her father, Edith went to rejoin Florinda, who was walking slowly down to the beach, leaning on Madame Latour, and followed by her attendants. Sir Reginald walked by them, but her head was averted from him, and he had an

air of haughty mortification, as though his attentions had been rejected.

"I hope, dear Edith, you won't think it necessary to take this voyage with me *par complaisance*," said Florinda, in answer to a remark of Edith's, that she feared an approaching shower.

"You don't suppose I mind a shower on my own account?" said Edith. "It was only on yours, for you are not used to such buffetings of wind and weather as I am."

"There is no occasion for your running any risks, however," said Reginald, hastily. "I shall see Lady Waldegrave safe to Kinmore."

"I beg I may not interfere with either Sir Reginald Malcolm's duties or pleasures," said Lady Waldegrave, coldly.

Edith was confounded; her heart swelled as she thought,—"He leaves me after all, and at what a time!" But she walked on in silence till they reached the boat.

"I have ordered my horses to meet me at the ferry," said Reginald, addressing her in the same hurried manner; "and I shall probably return to-morrow."

Edith's cheek flushed to crimson; but she caught Madame Latour's malicious eyes directed to her with a sort of triumphant smile; and, making a violent effort to retain her composure, she said, "Having *promised* Lady Elizabeth that I should make a point of accompanying Lady Waldegrave across the ferry, I feel bound to perform my promise."

"But you will have no one to return with you," said Reginald, evidently dissatisfied at this arrangement. Edith made no reply, for she could not speak; but she stepped into the boat, while Sir Reginald, having handed in Lady Waldegrave and Madame Latour, leaped in and placed himself between them.

It was one of those bright breezy mornings, when the sun, careering amid an ocean of white flickering clouds, seems to smile as he beholds them driven hither and thither on the wings of the wind, now casting their broad shadows on the mountain side, now viewing their own fair fantastic shapes in the depths of the clear waters. For a while, the boat skimmed rapidly along; but the clouds seemed to hurry still faster and

faster, their soft fleecy forms gradually turning to one dense expanse of livid grey. The sea-fowl were seen fluttering before the impending storm. At length the distant roar of the thunder was heard reverberating amongst the mountains, while the wind, which had suddenly fallen, as suddenly rose to stormy gusts, accompanied with driving sheets of rain.

"You will get wet, I fear," said Sir Reginald, as he drew a boat-cloak round Lady Waldegrave, and wrapt her in it, with the manner of one whom anxiety rendered careless of common forms. Edith felt a pang at this action, trifling as it was; but Reginald seemed unconscious alike of her presence or of Madame Latour's hysterical screams, for as the blast now raved with the fury of a mountain storm, that lady's cries for self-preservation increased in proportion. To those unaccustomed to the sudden and violent squalls which sweep over the mountain friths, and give to them all the sublimity of power and danger, this was an appalling storm. The darkness of night hung around, but the raging waters were white with foam, and the little boat,

now tossed to the clouds on the crest of some foaming billow, was as quickly precipitated into the yawning gulf, which seemed opening to receive it. Edith had witnessed similar scenes, and was too well accustomed to the capricious nature of inland navigation to be as much alarmed as her more inexperienced companions. Still there was enough of the perilous to excite feelings of awe, which would have raised her heart in prayer to Him who rules the tempest, and stills the wave. But, alas! one was there who stood even between her and heaven. Her eyes were fixed on Reginald, but Reginald's sought not hers—they were bent on Lady Waldegrave, with an expression of the most intense anxiety, and as she sat pale and trembling, uttering broken exclamations of alarm, he strove to soothe her by vehement assurances of safety and protection. But at length, as if overcome with terror, she closed her eyes, and sunk back, to all appearance lifeless. Then the long-repressed feelings of her lover's heart burst forth; and, forgetting every thing but that his adored Florinda lay dying—dead—before him, he threw his arms

around her, called wildly upon her in broken accents of the most impassioned tenderness to revive, and be his—his life—his love! and he placed her head on his shoulder, and hung over her as though his own life were at issue—again and again reiterating his vows of love, his fond entreaties.

And where was the neglected, the forgotten Edith? As if transfixed with agony, she remained calm and motionless; her eyes distended—her pale lips apart; she sat horror-stricken—speechless—and beheld each fond care that ought to have been hers, lavished upon another. A thousand racks could not have inflicted the tortures she endured. A whole life of suffering had been concentrated into one moment, but that moment would cast a blight over her whole existence!

In a short time, however, the wind subsided, the rain ceased, the roar of the angry waters died away, and the sun once more began to struggle through the mass of black clouds which still encompassed him. The boat had been driven from its course towards the point of Inch Orran, and

the crew, anticipating another squall, deemed it advisable to land. The progress of the little vessel had been anxiously watched from the house, and its hospitable inmates had hastened to the beach to welcome and assist the dripping passengers. Reginald, still reckless of all but his own selfish, soul-absorbing interests, bore Florinda in his arms to shore; but it was in silence, for his feelings were now suppressed when too late.

When Edith was consigned by Captain Malcolm to the cordial embrace of his wife, she folded a mere living statue to her bosom—no sound passed her lips—no expression spoke in her eye—all was the silence and vacancy of palsied feelings—of stupefaction of heart. When conveyed to an apartment, Mrs Malcolm in vain had recourse to the usual remedies, or sought gently to soothe her scared spirits to the salutary relief of tears. Edith seemed like a bird which had escaped some deadly peril, only to sink down stunned and exhausted, to pant its life away.

CHAPTER XXIII.

It was not until he had seen Lady Waldegrave restored to consciousness, that Reginald awoke from the delirium into which his selfish, headstrong passion had thrown him. He started as from a dream; but at the same time he was conscious that it was a dream in which he had laid bare the inmost recesses of his heart—that he had given to the winds that secret which he had sworn should never pass his lips—and that in the very ear of plighted love he had proclaimed the apostacy of his affection. His cheek burned with remorse and shame, even while—slave to passion!—his heart bounded with delight as one who had flung his fetters far from him. The barrier was now broken down, which had separated him from his idol; accident had now discovered to Edith that he loved another—he never

would have told her so; he never would have renounced her, but she might—she would—now renounce him—she might be happy too—and a tumult of wild contradictory feelings swelled in his heart as conscience and passion struggled for mastery. He waited with the most intense interest to hear how Edith bore the shock he well knew she must have sustained by this abrupt disclosure of his infidelity; and not even the witchery of Florinda's charms, as she appeared in renovated beauty, could so wholly engross him, but that both eye and ear were frequently turned from her to catch some tidings of Edith—dear Edith! What would he not give to be assured she was happy—as happy as he should be when satisfied that he had not been the destroyer of her happiness! Unable any longer to endure the workings of his own mind, he sent to request that Mrs Malcolm would see him, if but for a single moment.

Meanwhile, Mrs Malcolm was keeping watch by the couch of poor Edith. In the bustle that had prevailed at the landing of the little party, Reginald's behaviour had passed unnoticed; and

thus Edith's state of mind was inexplicable to one who had known her long, and had seen her, in circumstances of at least equal danger, evince the utmost strength of mind and self-possession. She had seen Lady Waldegrave for a few minutes, and had expressed to her, her surprise and alarm at Edith's aberration of mind; but though she appeared shocked, she had hastily waved the subject, saying, she herself had been wholly insensible to what had passed. As for Madame Latour, she was still too hysterical to be spoken with; nor, indeed, had it been otherwise, could she have thrown any light upon the subject beyond her own conjectures, as she and the attendants had all been too much agitated and absorbed in personal alarms, to have eyes or ears for any thing but their own danger. Aware of the impetuosity of Sir Reginald's feelings, Mrs Malcolm was unwilling to excite them by a hasty disclosure of Edith's alarming condition. She had, therefore, quietly despatched a message for the nearest medical assistance, trusting that, in the meantime, silence and repose would gradually restore her mind to its right tone. But her gentle cares

had hitherto been vain; her hapless charge continued in the same state of mute, rigid suffering; her breast heaving as if with some forbidden woe; her eyes fearfully open, as though they gazed on some vision of affright.

On receiving Sir Reginald's message, however, Mrs Malcolm thought it best to comply with his request. She found him in an adjoining apartment, pacing to and fro, in all the restlessness of excitement and suspense. It was so completely a part of that lady's character to speak the truth, at all times, and in all circumstances, that it never occurred to her to dissemble, or give it any false glosses to serve a temporary purpose; but she always spoke it with a sympathy and tenderness which usually disarmed it of its bitterest sting. But it was not from the fiery unregulated mind of Sir Reginald, that any truth, however gently told, which reproached his conscience and opposed his wishes, could meet with a submissive reception. Cautious and considerate as Mrs Malcolm had been in her communications, he was stung to the soul by self-reproach, and gave way to the most

vehement expressions of anguish and despair. He had been, he said, the destroyer of one who was dear to him as his own life. He called Heaven to witness there was no sacrifice he was not ready to make for her happiness;—he had suffered much for her sake—he would suffer all—any thing—every thing, to see her restored—he would see her himself—he would explain every thing.—His happiness was in her hands—he never could know peace until he saw her well and happy—and, for the moment, he was sincere. But Mrs Malcolm feared little for the passionate overflows of that grief, excessive as it was, which could thus vent itself in outward manifestations. It was the silence of poor Edith's overcharged heart which alarmed her; but she strove, by mild and gentle words, to soothe Sir Reginald into composure, and at last succeeded in restoring him to a comparative degree of calmness.

The surgeon soon after arrived, but as he possessed no more than common penetration, and in the course of his practice was little accustomed to minister to minds diseased, he saw nothing

more than a mere nervous panic in the case. Having, therefore, administered an opiate, and remained till it took effect, he recommended the patient to be kept perfectly quiet, and said, he had no doubt but that he should find all well when he returned the following day. This was a load off Reginald's heart, and his buoyant spirit soon rose in proportion to its previous depression. Edith, he was sure, would soon surmount the shock she had sustained by his abrupt disclosure; her sentiments would change, and all would yet be well. On hearing so favourable a report, Lady Waldegrave prepared for setting off to join her mother; for, although messengers had been dispatched both to her and Glenroy, to acquaint them with the safety of the party, it was not to be supposed she would rest satisfied with that, or that any other assurance, short of actually seeing her daughter, would quiet her natural fears.

Florinda said, she would have preferred remaining where she was, but that she knew Lady Elizabeth would not proceed without her, and that she could not bear the thought of bringing

so large a party, at such a time, to a house where quiet was enjoined. This seemed only what was considerate and reasonable, and Mr and Mrs Malcolm forbore to urge the invitation which their hospitality, rather than their inclination, had led them to make. They therefore followed that admirable precept,—"Welcome the coming, speed the parting guest," and ordered their horses to be got ready to carry the travellers forward on their journey.

"Although it is only a few miles from this to the ferry," said Captain Malcolm, addressing Lady Waldegrave; "yet as the road, in some places, borders rather too much on the sublime, I hope you will allow me, *faute de mieux*, to escort you so far, that I may consign you into Lady Elizabeth's hands, past all peril by land as well as by water, I trust."

Before Florinda could reply, Reginald hastily interposed, and said,—"Pardon me, Captain Malcolm; but I undertook the office of conducting Lady Waldegrave to her friends, and therefore consider myself bound to see her safe under Lady Elizabeth's care."

"It was an important trust that was committed to you, I admit; but may you not delegate your authority to another, and appoint me your proxy?" said Captain Malcolm, who supposed Sir Reginald must be doing the greatest violence to his feelings in quitting Edith at such a time, even for a few hours. "What do you say, Lady Waldegrave—don't you think a staid old Highlander may be as safe an escort as a hot-brained young lover, who——"

"I have already said," cried Reginald, with a heightened colour, and in great embarrassment, "that I must see Lady Waldegrave to the ferry myself. The distance is short, and I shall find my own horses there, or, most likely, I shall take the boat in returning. At all events, I shall be back here certainly within a few hours; and in that time——" He stopt, in emotion.

"And in that time," said Captain Malcolm, kindly, "our dear charge will, I trust, have a refreshing sleep; and that on your return you will find her perfectly restored. I give you credit, Sir Reginald, in thus sacrificing your own feelings to your sense of duty."

Reginald turned hastily away. Florinda slightly blushed, while she answered, That she hoped Sir Reginald would not think it necessary to make any *sacrifice* on her account; and she pronounced the word with emphasis.

At that moment the carriage was announced, and Madame Latour, having composed her spirits, changed her dress, repaired her charms, and partaken plentifully of some refreshments, now made her appearance. Mrs Malcolm, who had been with Edith, also entered to receive the adieus of the guests. She was struck at first with hearing of Sir Reginald's intention of accompanying the party so far on their way; but, like her husband, she gave him credit for his sense of duty thus prevailing over his dearer interests, especially when she read the struggle of his mind depicted on his countenance. Nor did this evince any want of common penetration —who can look back upon events in their own lives without acknowledging that there were times when they could not discern those things face to face, which, viewed retrospectively, showed clear as noonday?

CHAPTER XXIV.

Edith slept, but her sleep was short, and she awoke from it slowly and heavily; her head confused; her heart oppressed with a dreamy sense of ills too dreadful to be endured; a stunning sense of misery, occasionally roused to anguish, as long cherished thoughts of happiness struggled with new and agonizing feelings of misery. At length she put aside the curtain, and gazed around with a bewildered and enquiring look. Mrs Malcolm, who had been sitting anxiously watching her, now approached, and in a tender, yet cheerful tone, accosted her; but Edith at first only replied by a look of alarm and amazement, then, in a hurried manner, asked, "Where am I?"

"With me, my love; and you have been asleep."

"Then I have dreamt!" she cried, quickly; then, wildly clasping her hands, "And, oh! what a dream it was! I would not tell it to any one—no, not for worlds!"

"Try not to think of it either," said Mrs Malcolm, soothingly; "but close your eyes, and pray to God, Edith, love."

"And yet, if it was a dream," interrupted Edith, "why am I here? and where is——" And her eyes wandered round the room, then, sinking back on her pillow, she sighed, and said, "But it does not signify, since you say it was only a dream."

She remained silent for some minutes, and Mrs Malcolm hoped she had again fallen asleep; but quickly raising herself in bed, she said, in a hurried tone, "I must get up—that dream haunts me here—it is upon my pillow—it is in my head—it is upon my heart—I must get away from it."

"Dearest Edith, you shall do as you please," said her kind, considerate friend; "but will you not oblige me by remaining in bed for a little longer, and I will sit by you?"

"But if it were a dream, why—why do I see nobody else—where are *they*?" she demanded, in a tone of forced, unnatural calmness.

"Those you love best are all safe and well."

"*I* love!" exclaimed she, "how should you know?—No one knows how *I* love—he knows it not himself." And her breast heaved with strong emotion.

"Yes, dear Edith, there is one who knows you love him, but perhaps you know not how much he loves you, and how wretched he is about you."

"About *me*!" shrieked Edith; "oh, no—no—not about *me*," and her whole frame shook convulsively.

"Yes, dearest, even about you, and about no one else; but there is some misunderstanding"—

"Do you think me mad?" cried Edith, quickly interrupting her; "if you do, you are much, very much mistaken." Then shaking her head mournfully, "But if you knew what I know—if you had seen what I saw—if you felt what I feel—but nobody shall ever know, it shall all be buried with me, and there will be an end of it."

Mrs Malcolm saw that her feelings had sustained some rude shock, somehow connected with Reginald, and she feared to name him in the present excited state of her mind; she therefore tried another chord—a chord which, rightly touched, can never fail to vibrate in the feeling heart.

"Yes, my love, when it is God's will we shall all die and be buried, and there will indeed be an end of our earthly sorrows; but, I trust, he will spare you to us yet a while—for what would become of your father, your old grey-haired father, Edith, if he should lose you, his only child?"

Edith's heart heaved high, and, for a few moments, she struggled violently with her feelings; at last nature prevailed—she burst into a passionate flood of tears, and, throwing her arms round her friend's neck, wept long in silent anguish.

Mrs Malcolm made no attempt to check the genial current of feeling; for she knew that the grief which can feel even despair, is never so

dangerous as that which benumbs the spirits, and bereaves it even of the sense of feeling; and fragile as is thè mould of the human heart, 'tis one which may be bruised, but is rarely broken by the first rude shock it sustains. Oh, the depth of that agony which some may feel and live! Oh, the world of woe which may lie in the small compass of one solitary heart! Who can declare "all which may be borne and never told?"

It was not by confiding the secret of her sorrow that Edith felt she could lessen the burden of it. No human voice could speak comfort to her soul—no human hand could wipe away her tears—no human thought could fathom the depth of her anguish—no word of hers, therefore, should ever declare the wrongs she had endured. All she wished was to die; and as she laid her head on her pillow, it was with the look of one who desired never to raise it again.

Although the sense of this suffering lay deeper than she could discern, Mrs Malcolm deemed it unwise to endeavour too hastily to penetrate to it, and she rather sought gradually to lead Edith to the disclosure of it herself. A long interval

passed, during which Edith remained wholly absorbed in the anguish of her own spirit.

"Is there no way in which a fond and faithful friend can help you, dearest Edith?" said her friend, gently.

"None!" answered Edith, in a voice so sad and a tone so deep as seemed to bar all attempts at gaining her confidence.

"Not even by sharing your sorrow, my love?"

"You cannot!" returned Edith, in the same despairing accent.

"But there is one who may—one to whom you are still dear—one who has suffered much on your account"——She stopped, for she saw Edith's pale features convulsed with agony.

"Edith, dearest! is there nothing I *can* do for you?" cried her friend, as her own tears fell on the cold trembling hand she held in hers.

"Nothing!" said Edith, in the deep tone of hopeless misery, as she turned away.

"Yet, dearest, together we may thank God that your senses are restored to you; together we may pray that He will lighten this load of anguish from your heart; together we may ask

of Him, that his peace may calm your troubled spirit."

"It cannot be," murmured Edith, in a low suffocated voice.

Mrs Malcolm was shocked, but she said, in a soothing tone, "Strive against such unworthy, such unholy thoughts, Edith; and though you will not confide your grief to me, remember it is known to Him, who, doubtless for some wise purpose, has appointed this trial, whatever it is. Believe, dear Edith, only believe, that you are in the hands of a tender Father, an Almighty Protector, who can turn even our sorrows into blessings. I do not ask you not to weep, but I pray you may not yield to despair."

Edith made no reply, but she suffered her hand to be held in those of her friend, while they were raised in supplication for her; and gradually her features relaxed into a softer expression of anguish. The convulsive heavings of her breast subsided, her tears again flowed freely, and her judicious friend, tenderly embracing her, left her for a little, as she hoped, to the repose of exhausted nature.

CHAPTER XXV.

It is a common remark, that few things exercise a more baneful and despotic influence on the mind and feelings than an irregular or misplaced attachment; and Sir Reginald formed no exception to this general rule. Shrinking from the contemplation of the torture he had inflicted on the true and tender heart which had so long and devotedly been his, he sought to stifle the sense of her wrongs in the charms of Lady Waldegrave's society. It would have been agony to his selfish, fiery spirit, to have waited and watched the slow progress of her recovery from the wound his own hand had inflicted; for, to "suffer and be still," is perhaps one of the hardest lessons the proud heart of man can stoop to learn. He therefore strove by more active

exertion to banish the distracting thoughts that filled his mind, and sought a temporary refuge from the upbraidings of his conscience in the flattering unction that he was doing his duty, even while deserting the victim of his perfidy, for the author of her ruin. All this may appear inconsistent with a nature hitherto represented as amiable and generous. But there is a virtue and a generosity, whose roots are in selfishness, and which, when brought to the test, will ever bear its worthless fruits. Neither can consistency dwell in that heart, whose only law is impulse, whose only stimulant is self-gratification.

The presence of Madame Latour was some restraint upon the passionate overflow of his feelings. Much as he longed to lay open his whole heart to Florinda, he naturally shrunk from displaying it to any other eye than that of love. Enough, however, passed on both sides, to satisfy themselves that they were mutually beloved, and for the present that consciousness sufficed. On reaching their destination, they found Lady Elizabeth in all the fidgetiness of anxiety and impatience, and a foolish

scene of weeping, chiding, exclaiming, caressing, ensued. It required a strong effort for Sir Reginald to tear himself away at the very time when Florinda seemed more his own than ever she had been; when his love for her burst the barrier that had hitherto suppressed it, and without explanation all had been explained, for all was understood and forgiven. Fain would he have lingered, and fainer still would he have accompanied her on her way, and guarded her from the host of rivals that would soon surround her. But having consigned her to the care of her mother, and seen both depart under the guidance of the Duke's servants, he had no longer an excuse for lingering, and with reluctant, though anxious heart, he returned to Inch Orran.

Glenroy's impatience all this while knew no bounds. Captain Malcolm had gone in person to relieve his anxiety, and to inform him, without entering into particulars, that as Edith had been so much alarmed, there was a necessity for her remaining quietly where she was for the present. The Chief acquiesced, when assured

there was no danger to be now apprehended, at the same time expressing great contempt at such womanish weakness. It was, he said, enough to provoke any man of common sense to see a woman giving herself such airs for a puff of wind; but it was all the fault of that silly creature Molly Macauley, who had made a perfect fool of the girl; and then, as usual, his anger was wreaked on that innocent victim. Captain Malcolm then took leave, with reiterated messages to Reginald to come to him immediately, as he could not live without him. On his return he met Sir Reginald, just landed, and communicated to him his uncle's wish—a mark of his affection he could well have dispensed with in the present situation of affairs—to go to Glenroy, as his future son-in-law, at the very time when he had virtually renounced his daughter, and to have his marriage made the perpetual theme, when he knew that, in all probability, that marriage never would take place. It was torture to think of it, and he involuntarily exclaimed—"Impossible!—I cannot move from this till I know"—then, recollecting himself, he stopped.

Captain Malcolm perceived his embarrassment and dissatisfaction, which he imputed to a different cause, and he said, "This is indeed hard work for you, Sir Reginald, to be again called upon to sacrifice your own wishes to a sense of duty, but you may now do it with an easier mind. Miss Malcolm, though very low, it seems is now restored to herself, and I trust will soon be to you. In the meantime, quiet is still necessary, and as you are not likely to promote that in the present state of your feelings, I must therefore be so disinterested as to recommend your returning to poor Glenroy."

"I cannot," said Reginald, impatiently.

"It is no very pleasant task I have taken upon myself to press you to leave my house," said his friend, good humouredly; "but I know I need not apologize to you for such a breach of hospitality."

"I am sensible of your good intentions," said Reginald, in a quick, impatient manner; "but you will oblige me by allowing me to judge and act for myself on this occasion. I—in short,"—he stopped as if at a loss how to proceed, then

added—"But if my remaining here occasions any inconvenience, I shall endeavour to find accommodation for the night elsewhere."

There was no contesting the point any longer. He remained, and the night was passed in a state of gloomy restlessness by him—of sleepless anguish by Edith—griefs differing in kind as in degree; for even amid the reproaches of conscience, and the struggles of remorse, as gratitude, tenderness, and pity filled his heart, still the idol, passion had erected, maintained its sway, and in his imagination shone forth fair and beauteous, even amid the wreck it had made.

But with Edith all was dimness and desolation. No star shed its light in her path—in her existence there was no object which even hope could for an instant illume. Amid the darkness that brooded in her heart, heaven and earth, the present and the future, were alike an undistinguishable chaos, and only one dreary hope was hers—the hope of despair. She felt it was impossible she could long exist under such a weight of woe as had overwhelmed her; soon, very soon, she should pass away and be at rest. But she knew

not the capacity of the human heart for suffering—she knew not those depths profound, where sorrow, unseen, unsuspected, dwells through many a long life. "Nous ne connoissons l'infini que par la douleur!" All the faith of her early days—all the cherished feelings of a lifetime—all the fond gatherings up of woman's love and tenderness, which she had deemed were treasured in her lover's heart, had been rudely cast from him as slighted, priceless things; and for an instant, her pale cheek glowed at the indignity. But bitter as these feelings were, they were rendered still more so by the thoughts of the disappointment and sorrow that awaited her father. All his proud imaginations to be thus cast down—his hopes laid in the dust, where his own grey head would soon be brought low by the hands which ought to have smoothed the pillow of his old age! And yet it must be! Nought remained for her but to sever the last feeble link of those ties which, entwined as they were with every feeling of her heart, hung only as a galling yoke on the breast of her false lover. With the courage of despair,

she drew from her finger the ring of betrothment—that ring which his faithless hand had placed there, with the vow of eternal constancy, and which, like a talisman, had ever guarded her heart against all fears and suspicions of his fidelity. Even this inanimate object, associated as it was with all the hopes and the joys of her life, it was anguish unspeakable to part with; her heart recoiled from the deed, and again and again she relinquished the attempt. But then the thought, that Reginald might for an instant suppose she still retained her claim upon his hand, even when convinced that his affections were given to another, that was not to be endured! She hastily folded and sealed the ring in a small packet; and when Mrs Malcolm at an early hour entered her apartment, she put it into her hand, and, with forced composure, requested that she would convey it to its destination.

Mrs Malcolm was not deceived by this assumed fortitude—she saw it was the result of excitement, not of resignation; it was easy to guess at the contents of the packet, and she said, "I

will do any thing—any thing for you, my love, that can be for your good, but—*must* this be?"

"It must," replied Edith, still retaining her composure.

"May there not be some mistake, which a mutual friend might assist you in clearing up? Dearest Edith, do not entirely cast away your own happiness, and that of others."

Edith could not speak, and she buried her face in her hands, while her heart heaved with strong emotion.

Mrs Malcolm tenderly embraced her. "Edith," she said, "I have known and loved you from a child, both for your own sake, and that of our dear Ronald, to whom you were dearer, if possible, than his own sisters. I cannot then be silent and see you thus; if you will not confide to me the cause of your distress, will you allow me to hint to you what, I fear, has happened?"

Edith gasped for a few moments, as if for utterance, then, by a strong effort, said, "We are parted, and *for ever!* Oh, do not ask me

more—take that," pointing to the ring, "in mercy take it from my sight!"

Mrs Malcolm, too wise to persist where she saw such extreme agitation ensue, refrained from urging the topic any farther; but shocked and distressed as she was, she strove to soothe Edith into greater composure, and then left her, to seek Sir Reginald, for the purpose of executing her commission. On viewing the packet, he hastily tore it open, and at sight of the ring turned pale; tears sprung from his eyes; he struck his forehead with his hand, and at length, unable to control the emotion he was unwilling to avow, he rushed from the room. The sight of the ring had awakened a train of remembrances that had long slumbered in his heart. The fair image of Edith, tender, innocent, and true, rose to his mind's eye. That gentle, loving being—the playfellow of his childhood—the companion of his youth—his once beloved—his betrothed—oh, had he wronged her, and had she renounced him, without one word of reproach!

There are moments when even the master

passion of the soul is overcome by stormy and sudden emotion. And so it was when this mute remembrancer of sweet and happy days reminded him, more eloquently than words could have done, of the vows he had broken, of the joys he had blighted. In the anguish of self-condemnation, it was a relief to him to give utterance to his feelings, by writing to Edith, and with his usual impetuosity, he poured them forth in a strain too agitated and contradictory to meet the eye of any but her to whom it was addressed. While he reviled and denounced himself in the bitterest terms, he, at the same time, sought to extenuate and vindicate his conduct, and while he declared that her happiness was a thousand times more precious to him than his own, he pleaded the overwhelming force of his passion for another, as the excuse for his apostacy from her. He returned her the ring—he besought her to keep it, at least for the present; he could not, he would not receive it from her now. A time might come when it might cost them both less to part; but now it must be with breaking hearts.

Edith's emotion, at reading the letter, was not less than that with which it had been written; but her part was taken with the "courage of a wounded heart." She answered it.

"The time *has* come when we must part—when we have parted, and for ever. No human power can ever again unite us—no separation can be more complete than that which has already taken place. You cannot recall the past—do not then, I beseech you, by vain remonstrance, seek still more to embitter the present. Yet, in one thing, you can gratify me. and it will be my last request. Go to my poor father, bear with him, soothe him for my sake. From me he shall never learn what has passed—he need never hear it from any one else. And when I die—Oh, Reginald—by the love you once bore me, do not desert my father in the hour of affliction! be to him all, and more, than I could ever have been! so shall my last prayer be for your happiness.

"E. M."

How often, in the passionate longings of a blinded heart, and a wayward fancy, had Reginald wished this time to come, the time when Edith, with her own hand, should set him free! And now that it had come, what were its fruits, but bitter tears of sorrow and remorse? What slavery could ever have been half so galling, as freedom thus bestowed? And so it must ever be in the accomplishment of all unjust and unhallowed wishes, unless when the heart is callous, and the conscience seared to all the soul's best attributes. Again he wrote under the influence of strongly excited feelings.

"Oh, Edith, how your generous forbearance wrings my heart! You say I cannot recall the past—would to God I could, for I could bear all things but the thoughts of having brought sorrow upon you—you who are still dear to me as my own soul. Talk not of dying, dearest Edith, for I swear I will not survive you! With my own hands I will end my hateful existence, rather than live as your destroyer! And there is one who will suffer little less than either of us, when

she knows all. She is innocent, indeed she is, of all that has happened. The fault is mine; ah, do not wrong her, then, even in thought! Alas! she knew not what a wretch she loved. I will obey you, cost what it may—I will go to Glenroy, and, for your sake, I will even play the hypocrite before him; only let me have the satisfaction of serving you, and there is no sacrifice I am not ready to make. Edith, dearest Edith, if we may not be to each other what we have been, at least let me hope that we may one day meet with other, perhaps better, because less mutable feelings, than those we once cherished. Oh, let me conjure you then to regard yourself, if you would shew pity towards one whose life and happiness are wrapt in yours.

"R. M."

Edith made no reply, and Reginald returned to Glenroy.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The faithful Mrs Macauley lost no time in hastening to her beloved charge; but she was panic-struck with the change that had already taken place on those cherished features. Edith, indeed, looked a monument of living woe. The overwhelming past already told its tale of misery, of a heart laid waste and desolate, of "spirits broken, joys o'ercast," and eyes that seemed as though they never more might smile.

Mrs Macauley had seen in her day the effects of sickness and of sorrow; but here was something differing from aught she had ever beheld; and she gazed with affright on the mournful indications of a breaking heart. At length, she said,—"Oh! my dear, and is not this very dreadful—what has come over you? for, my darling, I

never saw any thing in this world look like you. Oh ! what can it be ?"

" You will soon know," said Edith, in a hard, unnatural tone, and, in her own mind, alluding to her death.

" Well, the sooner the better, my lamb, that we may know what to do ; for I declare I'm frightened to look at you—you're not like the same creature you was."

" In the mean time, you will oblige me by taking no notice—by saying nothing about me, either to myself or to any body else," said Edith, speaking slowly, and with difficulty.

" Oh ! my darling, how can I say nothing, when I see you looking like——something I cannot put a name upon ? For though your face is as white as a ghost's, it has not the peace and rest that's in a ghost's face." And poor Macky looked wistfully at her.

" It will soon have them, I hope," said Edith, with a smile of anguish. " I have been sick—ill—but it will soon be over."

" But how will it be over, my dear ?" looking anxiously in Edith's face, with a bewildered air.

Then, as the meaning flashed upon her, she burst into a violent flood of tears.—"Oh! my darling," she cried, when at last she was able to articulate, "you don't mean to say you are going to leave us for a better world, and you so young, and so happy in this same evil world—and I, that am so old!"——And poor Macky's feelings again burst forth. While the tears rolled down her cheeks, she went on,—"But I'm waiting my time patiently; and ought not you to do it, too? And well you may, with so much to make you pleased and contented."

"I *am* contented," said Edith, with a faint, ghastly smile. "Do not, then, distress yourself on my account."

"Not distress myself on your account, my heart's jewel! And how can I not distress myself? But what does it signify what becomes of me—though my old heart should break, what does that signify?—But your poor papa, and your own true love—what will become of them?"

"Do not!"—gasped Edith, faintly, and waving her hand.

"Oh! my dear, would it not do your heart

good to hear how miserable *he* is about you; so miserable, that he is shut up in his own room, and his very door locked, too! except when he goes now and then to Glenroy; and then he looks—'deed he looks not very chancy, as if he was hardly himself. I'm frightened at you both." Then, with a sudden start of joy, she exclaimed, —"But I think—I think I can guess what it is! —Have not you cast out, my dear, is not that all? Will you not 'gree again? Aye, that you will, or sorrow take me!"

It was some minutes before Edith could command herself sufficiently to speak; at length she said, and her features were almost convulsed in her efforts to appear calm,—"I know your kindness—I feel it too; but if you really love me—if you would serve me in the only way you *can* do it, you will not torture me by"——Her voice sank, but she made an effort, and went on,—"by mentioning those names.—Do not—do not ask me questions! I cannot—I *will not* answer."

"My darling, and then am I not to know what it is that's the matter with you?" cried

poor Mrs Macauley, her eyes twinkling with astonishment through her tears.

"You, nor no one else, can do me any good —it is *impossible.* I want nothing—I wish nothing, but to be undisturbed."

"Oh, my dearest! If you did but see yourself in the glass, you would not venture to say that; for not a bit of your face but tells another tale—as sure as death, it's the face of a broken heart." And again a flood of tears burst forth.

"And will you not tell me who and what it is that has done it," cried she, throwing her arms round Edith, "when you know I could give my own heart thankfully, if it could bring joy to yours? And will you not tell me, then, how I'm to do it?"

Edith disengaged herself from her embrace, and, with the paleness of death on her face, but with a calm and resolved air, said,—"Yes—look upon me as one already dead—one whom no human power can restore to"——happiness she would have said, but her voice failed, and her lips shrunk from pronouncing the rest. "There is one way, and only one, in which you can serve

me." And she laid her hand on Mrs Macauley as she spoke,—" Comfort my father—strive to reconcile him to"——

" To what, my darling?" cried Mrs Macauley, eagerly.

" To the will of God!" said Edith, in a low, deep voice; and, wringing the hand of her poor old friend, she entered her dressing-room and closed the door.

There is a determined character of grief which carries a sacredness and an awe along with it, and which silences all attempts at consolation. Such was Edith's, and such the effect it produced on the mind of poor Mrs Macauley, as slowly and reluctantly she relinquished the hope of gaining the confidence, and removing the affliction, of her beloved charge. She had too much innate delicacy to intrude farther upon her privacy. She saw the wound was too deep for her unpractised hand to probe; but she still hoped the one that had dealt the blow might likewise have the power to staunch the wound. She returned home to seek Sir Reginald, and prevailed upon him to see her alone for a few

minutes, in order to represent to him the situation of his betrothed. But her courage almost failed her when she saw the towering, the overwhelming force of mingled grief and passion with which he received her sad and simple annunciation; and his vehement burst of sorrow was as inexplicable to her as Edith's settled despair.

"Oh, Sir Reginald," she cried, laying her hand on his arm to detain him, "if you would not be affronted at me, I would just say what I think, and then you would tell me if I'm wrong, and then we would get every thing put right again; for 'deed, if it is not done soon, that sweet lamb will go her way to a better world. And oh, if you have only cast out in a common way, what for cannot you 'gree again? But somehow,—I do not know how to say it, I think so much shame of evenin' you to such a thing! But, I've taken it into my head that—'deed, I never liked that Frenchwoman—I thought she had a very curious look with her eye—I did not like it; and I thought sometimes there was some-

thing, I could not tell what, going on: and to think how she used to take upon her to disparage Miss Edith, before your face too! And now I may just as well tell you at once, that I cannot help thinking it's she that has made all this mischief between you and your own true love!"

Sir Reginald's only reply was to dash from him the hand which would have sought to detain him; and, rushing from her in agony of excited feeling, he sought to stifle the upbraidings of his heart by again pouring it forth with all its incoherencies and inconsistencies, to Edith, and supplicating her again to forgive and forget the past, even while his every word proclaimed the struggle of his mind, as passion and pity alternately prevailed. He spoke of the tortures he endured by remaining at Glenroy, where every object reminded him of his lost happiness, and of the baseness of submitting to practise a deception against which his soul recoiled.

Edith felt all this as only an aggravation of her wretchedness. Worlds now would not have

tempted her to become the wife of him she loved—for even in renouncing she still loved him. And there is perhaps no anguish more acute, no struggle more severe, than when called upon to despise and abjure the object of our once—of our still tender affection. Yet, to the youthful heart, there is a charm in extreme mental suffering—a luxury of woe, which makes us reject with scorn all that could lessen or alleviate it. Were the burden less, we might strive even in our own strength, to cast it from us; but when the spirit seems fairly crushed beneath its overwhelming weight, it requires no effort to support it; and, paradoxical as it may appear, we passively yield to what we at the same time feel to be insupportable. Such is the effect calamity produces on some minds, while others are stimulated to seek relief from the galling pressure, whose iron has entered their souls—alas! as if only to fester and corrode them. So it was with Reginald—inaction was intolerable to him; in the feverish excitement of his mind, he again wrote to Edith; but his letter was not answered. He went to Inch Orran, and de-

manded to see her—but she resisted his importunities. In a transport of mingled passions, which it would not have been easy to analyze, he left the house, but instead of returning to Glenroy, he departed to Dunshiera.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Sorrow is a sacred thing," but when carried to excess, it is also a selfish thing. In the first excitement of feeling, Edith had felt for others as well as for herself; and the thoughts of her father's disappointment had added bitterness to her own. But now she heard he was ill—bed-rid, with comparatively little emotion; for to violent sorrow had succeeded a sort of heartless stupefaction, and her mind had sunk into a state of melancholy, which seemed to render her either insensible or indifferent to every thing. Hers was become—

> "A grief without a pang, void, dark, and drear,
> A stifled, drowsy, unimpassion'd grief,
> Which finds no natural outlet or relief,
> In word, or sigh, or tear."

Pride now seemed the only feeling alive in that heart where once had dwelt all the sweetest,

softest emotions. And pride would sometimes give an indignant throb, and light up her languid eye, and suffuse her pale cheek, and she would struggle to cast off the load with which memory weighed her spirit down. But hers was not a proud nature, and the faint effort was only succeeded by deeper dejection. The buoyancy of life and hope seemed fled; yet there is in youth a tenacity of both, which rarely, if ever, relinquishes its hold of either. Unnoticed and unsuspected by its possessor, the mind, even in its darkest state, is still languishing for light, still putting forth new shoots, even though it may not discern the object to which it may yet attach itself.

Mrs Malcolm knew enough of human nature to be aware of this. Though gentle and unobtrusive, she was judicious and unremitting in her efforts to call forth the latent energies of the soul, and direct them to higher and more permanent sources of happiness. But all who have ever striven to stem or turn the current of afflictions, whose channel is in the very depths of the heart, well know how laborious, and apparently hope-

less, is the task when no other fount is open to receive them.

Edith was naturally reserved in her disposition; and although, in the first anguish of her feelings, she had betrayed, rather than divulged, the secret of her heart to Mrs Malcolm, to no one else had she, or would she, breathe even a sigh of regret. She rarely, indeed, ever alluded to the subject even to her friend; still she felt it was soothing to her to be with one who knew what was passing in her mind, even when the mind itself was closed against all communication. The history of her whole life seemed as if all compressed into that single event; and there was an indolent, melancholy pleasure in being with one who knew that history, and silently sympathized in it. But she wished no one else to share in that knowledge—participate in those feelings—she was jealous almost of the appearance of it. While, on the other hand, if the happy, light-hearted girls sought to win her to their occupations and amusements, the sight of their gaiety, contrasted with her own wretchedness, only served to estrange her from them the more. The

only member of the family, besides Mrs Malcolm, in whose society she seemed to take the slightest pleasure, was the youngest boy; in his beauty, in the sweetness of his disposition, in his every look and expression, he reminded her of her favourite play-fellow, the warm-hearted, generous Ronald. She endured his presence when all others seemed distasteful; and Mrs Malcolm hoped that when the current of her affections should once more begin to flow, her young favourite might again become an object of interest to her. But she knew, for she had experienced, that for the afflictions of life there exists but one genuine fountain of consolation—the assured belief, that all our earthly sorrows, and our transitory sufferings, are ordained by unerring Wisdom and infinite Love. And where this belief exists, the darts of anguish, however they may pierce, will never fix and rankle in the soul.

Edith had religious feeling, but she had not religious principle; and thus, what might have been the medicine to check and mitigate the fever of her heart, had served rather as the aliment to feed and pamper its sickly sensibilities.

With all this pertinacity of suffering, however, she refused nothing that was required of her; but her compliances seemed those of a body without a soul—all was calm, but all was joyless and hopeless as the slumber of the dead. It was from this state of rigid melancholy that Mrs Malcolm was anxious to recover Edith. It was possible the sight of her father might produce a strong impression; but in her present state she feared the effect of any violent perturbation of the spirits, and was desirous that she should remain under her own eye till her mind had regained somewhat of its natural tone.

As a gentle mode of experiment, she one day proposed to her, to accompany her on a visit to a poor couple who had lately lost a daughter, their only child; and, from the character of the people, she was in hopes a salutary influence might be imparted, even from their lowly shed. Edith agreed to the proposal, with the same vacant, preoccupied look with which she assented to every thing that was suggested to her—a look, which told more plainly than words could have done, that all scenes, whether of pain or plea-

sure, were now alike to her. Their destination was to a cottage in a wild, secluded glen, or rather a hollow of the bleak and sterile mountains which surrounded it. Edith remembered it well. It was the same she had pointed out to Florinda on their way to church. But how different were her feelings then, from what they were now! Then, there was delight in every breeze—joy in every sunbeam. Life needed no stimulants to give it a zest—all was excitement; the excitement of youthful sensation—the glow of a happy heart. Now all was changed; the sunbeam that had gilded the illusion was fled, and only the dark vapour remained; now she was ready to exclaim, with her own mountain-bard, "The narrow house is pleasant to me, and the grey stone of the dead." As she gazed on the lonely cottage, Florinda's words recurred to her with a bitter pang, "Love might transform even that wretched hut into a bower of paradise." "*Could* she love him more than I did?" thought she. "Oh, no, no! she might love him differently, but she could not love him more!" Mrs Malcolm marked with satisfaction

the glow of animation, agonized as it was, which crossed her features as the whole scene came vividly to her mind. Any thing was better than the state of lifeless melancholy in which she had so long been sunk, just as that pain is salutary which denotes returning animation.

"You look with affright on that dreary dwelling, I perceive," said Mrs Malcolm.

"Yes," said Edith aloud, as she continued to gaze with a sad and abstracted air, "she said true, to dwell there *would* be paradise, compared to—" And she sighed, as though her heart was breaking.

"Do you believe there is such a thing as paradise on earth, Edith?" said her friend gently, seeking to turn her thoughts from the direction she perceived they had taken.

"Once I did," said Edith, in the same thrilling tone of anguish.

"And even in that wretched hut?"

"Ay, any where."

"And you have discovered the fallacy of your expectations?" Edith was silent.

"You are not singular, my love," said her

friend; "we all set out in life with the hope of creating for ourselves a paradise on earth, and all, sooner or later, live to mourn the vain, the unhallowed expectation."

"Not all," said Edith, bitterly.

"All—all—be assured, it is so ordained; and those who have grasped at happiness, have found it either a shadow or a shroud. So it has ever been, and so it will ever be."

"Are not you happy?" enquired Edith, with more of interest than she had for a long while evinced.

"Resigned—contented—grateful—these, I hope, I am," answered her friend; "but happy I am not, according to my ideas of felicity."

"Yet *you* have every thing, while I"——she stopped—choked with emotion.

"But every thing here below is imperfect, and in its nature fraught with anxiety and sorrow. And—shall I own my weakness—my sinfulness?—Even in the midst of the many blessings with which you see me surrounded, still—still my heart yearns for my long-lost boy! still a haunting mystery seems to me to hang over his

fate. Still a false, delusive voice whispers to me at times, that perhaps he still lives—lives a captive or a slave! Judge then, whether I can be what you would call happy?"

"But he was not your *all*," said Edith, with agitation.

"Ah, Edith, is there any of us whose *all* centres in one frail perishable creature? Has God given us affections, and feelings, and capacities of enjoyment to be *all* lavished exclusively on one object—and that object not himself?"

"It may be sinful—but—but I cannot help it," said Edith, in a despairing accent.

"No, dearest, you cannot help it, but God will help you. Only be assured he loves you with a love inconceivably beyond that which any creature ever has felt, or ever can feel for you—and your heart will no longer remain closed against the consolations he offers you. Ah! Edith, it was when the doors were shut that He who came to succour and to save, stood in the midst of his disciples; and 'tis when the heart is closed against all earthly consolation that divine love still finds entrance."

Edith's only answer was a sigh; and Mrs Malcolm wisely forbore to press the subject farther at present. They therefore proceeded in silence till they reached the lonely hut. It is rarely that any thing of what sentimentalists call an interesting nature, is to be met with amid the coarse avocations of humble life; yet the elements of suffering and of feeling are the same in all ranks, and the short and simple annals of the poor, sometimes contain much of Christian faith and moral beauty. They were met at the door of the cottage by a middle-aged man, with grizzled hair, and a countenance which bore the impress of deep and recent sorrow. Mrs Malcolm accosted him in kindly accents, but a respectful bow was the only answer he at first seemed able to return. She next enquired for his wife —and making a strong effort, as he drew his hand across his eyes, he said—and his voice seemed ready to fail him as he spoke :—" Nelly's no just as she should be, my leddy; she's no just hersell yet."

" You don't mean, Duncan, that her mind has been unsettled by her loss?"

"O, no—no, my leddy—God be praised—no so bad as that! she aye knew the hand that was dealing wi' her; she never lost sight o' that—His name be praised! but step in; my leddy, and you'll see her as she is, poor thing!"

Mrs Malcolm and Edith entered the lonely dwelling, where sat the childless mother, with a Bible on her knees. At sight of them she hastily rose, and turning away, covered her face with her hands, and wept.

"You'll excuse her, my leddy," said poor Duncan, with emotion.

"I ought to ask Nelly to excuse me for disturbing her perhaps too soon," said Mrs Malcolm, gently.

"Oh, my leddy!" was all Duncan could say. Nelly turned round, and while with one hand she strove to stem the tears as they flowed profusely over her face—with the other, she wiped down the seats for her guests, then tried to speak, but only her lips moved. Then, as if disappointed at the failure, she again turned away, and gave free course to her sorrow.

"It's just because she has not seen you, my

leddy, since *she* was ta'en frae us," said Duncan, struggling to master his own feelings, while the workings of his features betrayed what it cost him.

"But it's ower now," said Nelly, with a sigh. "It was just a heart-stound, my leddy, that's past and awa'." And she turned round with a sad but composed air. There was not much of external beauty in the aspects of this poor couple to excite the feelings—but simple sorrow is always touching—and even Edith felt interested as she looked on the desolate pair, bereft of their stay, and seemingly devoid of all those outward sources of consolation, which, though they in reality minister little or no relief to the lone mourner, yet seem as if they ought to mitigate the bitterness of affliction. But here were none of the appliances of artificial refinement, either within doors or without. The brown heath, the dreary mountain, and the wild streamlet, were the only objects that surrounded them. All else was silence and solitude.

"Have you had a visit from the minister yet?" enquired Mrs Malcolm.

"You'll mean Mr Stewart, my leddy?—Ay, oh ay, 'deed we've had that, and muckle need we had o' him, for we were sorely unwilling—oh 'deed were we—to give *her* back to Him that gave her to us," and Duncan's eyes moistened with tears as he spoke.

"That is a natural feeling, Duncan," said Mrs Malcolm, "and mercifully it is not a forbidden one—we *may* mourn the loss of those we love, only 'not as those who have no hope.'"

"Ay, that's just it, my leddy; for as the blessed King David said, in his distress, 'I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me.' That's a grand promise, my leddy; but oh, there's a sad thought too!"

"It is so; but the hope set before us is so full of consolation, that it must strengthen our hearts to hear the mournful truth which nature will proclaim to us in the time of our affliction."

"Oh, is na that true, Nelly?" said Duncan, trying to speak cheeringly to his wife.

Nelly pointed to a tartan plaid or screen which hung against the wall, and had belonged to her daughter; and while tears trickled down her

chedk, she bent her head, and said, "God's will be done!"

"And His will is, Nelly," said Mrs Malcolm, "that we should make Him the sure and steadfast anchor of our souls—that we should turn our thoughts as much as possible from the grave, which holds merely the perishable body of the spirit we loved, to Him who dwelleth in light and glory, and in whose presence that spirit, we may hope, is now enjoying perfect and endless felicity. I, like you, have known what it is to lose a child, and still, often, too often, the melancholy thought will rise, 'he shall not return to me;' but God has said, 'I shall go to him.' We know that all things that befall us are ordained of God, and will work together for the good of our immortal souls, and we cannot tell—perhaps it is the very separation we so much mourn, that may be the appointed means of reuniting us again, for ever, to the friend we loved—for where our treasure is, there will our heart be also."

"Do you hear that, Nelly?" enquired Duncan, anxiously.

"'Deed, it may be so, and it's a blessed

thought, ony wise," said Nelly, brightening up a little.

"Ay, many are the blessings we have to be thankful for, Nelly, though our ungrateful hearts refuse to own them, when a part's taken away from us," said Duncan. "We have His power above us and around us," added he, reverently, "and His word before us, and His spirit within us; and are na these great blessings for sinful creatures like us?"

"They are indeed, Duncan," said Mrs Malcolm; "and you have well chosen that better part which shall not be taken away from you. But, perhaps, it might be of service to Nelly, were you to leave your home for a while; yours is a lonely dwelling; you have no friends near to speak a word of comfort to you now and then, and the winter is approaching when you will feel still more desolate. Donald M'Intyre's cottage is now empty, and you will find it more comfortable than your own; besides, you will be nearer both to Inch Orran and your good minister, Mr Stewart."

"They would be great comforts, to be sure,"

said Duncan; "but——" he stopped, and his wife and he looked at each other; but their looks betokened no gladness at the proposal.

"Oh, no—no, my leddy," said Nelly; "mony thanks to you, and mony blessings be upon you for a' you've done for us frae first to last; but we couldna be better; we wadna be sae weel onywhere as we're here; we need nae company, my leddy; we're the best company to ane anither, for we can speak o' our bairn, our bonny Jeanie, and we can see a' thing that she used to see, and the braid sun, and the bonny moon, shinin' upon us just as they used to do when she was here—Oh, I dinna think they wad hae the same look to me ony where else!"

Mrs Malcolm forbore to urge the proposal, as they both seemed to retain so strong a local attachment for the scenes, bleak and sterile as they were, which had once been gladdened by the presence of their child; and the feeling is a natural one to such as have felt that "there is joy in grief, when peace dwells in the breast of the sad;" and where the heart has laid down

what it most loved, there it is also desirous of laying itself down.

"This is no bower of paradise, you perceive," said Mrs Malcolm to Edith, as they quitted the cottage; "but it is something better—it is the abode of Christian faith and hope."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Edith's feelings had been touched by the scene she had witnessed, and on the way home she conversed upon it more freely, and with greater interest than she had recently done upon any subject.

When she returned to Inch Orran she found the following letter had arrived in her absence:

"My Darling,

"I hope you will not be frightened, though 'deed I am not very easy myself, for we are such 'curious creatures that we cannot tell what may happen—and may be it is better we should not, for 'we know not what a day may bring forth.' Oh! if it would bring a good hearty fit of the gout into his feet, what a mercy that would be;

for I do not like its wander, wandering this way up and down his whole body, and never resting in one place. I mean your own papa, my dear, for he is really not what he should be; and what frightens me most of all, he is so remarkably good-natured and easily pleased, not but what he was always good and kind to me; but it would melt a heart of stone to hear how gently he speaks now.—'Deed I could not help crying this morning when he held out his hand to me, and said, in such a soft voice, 'Molly,' says he, 'you are not a bad creature, after all.' —'What makes you think that, Glenroy?' said I; for you know we are all bad creatures the best of us.—'Aye, you stick by me when *they* have deserted me,' says he.—Was not that good of him? But though I was so pleased, I was vexed too, that he should think any body could desert him; and so I took the liberty of saying, 'Oh, Glenroy, you know I will stick to you with my dying breath, and so will every body that you please to have about you.' And then he shook his head, and said, 'No, no, Mclly, nobody thinks of pleasing me now—they're both gone and left

me, and the sooner I go the better—and I've nobody now but you, Molly, and you'll be going off too some of these days.' And then he rambled and spoke, as if he thought I was going off—and poor Benbowie too! I was really hurt at that, though I knew he did not intend it. When he wakens out of his sleep, he often calls for you, and another person too, and he thinks, good man, that you are gone away together; so how he will be pleased to see you by yourself, I cannot tell, for I do not know—but I know it is children's duty to obey their parents, which you always did, I'm sure, and take care of them when they are sick, and be kind to them in their old age; and may be it would comfort you to think that you had been a comfort to him. And even if you should vex him by coming, is not that better than to vex him by staying away? Surely, I think it is. I hope you understand this, and that I have made myself plain to you; but I cannot be very sure of what I am saying, for I am not just so heartsome as I used to be, and is not that extraordinary when there's nobody but Benbowie and me to

divert Glenroy, and him in his bed so dull, good man! but who knows but if you please to come back, we will all come right again; for I pray he may be spared to us yet, and that I may get many a good scold from him, good and kind as he has always been to me! I hope you will be pleased with my letter, and all that I have said, which is the truth, from, my darling,

"Your old and true friend,

"M. MACAULEY."

Edith shed tears on reading this homely effusion, the first she had shed for many weeks, and Mrs Malcolm hailed them with pleasure, as the harbingers of renovated feelings which had too long lain dormant in her heart. It required an effort to resolve upon returning home to encounter the heart-rending interrogatories which she was aware must be awaiting her—which she felt it would be death to her father to answer truly, and which she yet knew not how she should evade. It was a trial from which she shrunk, but which she, nevertheless, now felt it her duty

to undergo, and Mrs Malcolm confirmed her in the resolution.

"It is assuredly your duty, my dear," said Mrs Malcolm; "and when we are convinced of that, we have only to commit the event to God. The *motive* only is ours—the consequences are His; and His command is, that you forsake not your father when he is old and grey-headed. Ah, Edith, account it a privilege and a blessing to be the comfort of your father's old age!"

"That I can never be," said Edith. "I can never be otherwise in his eyes than the cause of sorrow and disappointment"—— She stopped in emotion.

"But even that very sorrow and disappointment may be the means of producing a salutary influence on your father's mind. You may be the instrument in the hand of God to work a good work; not, indeed, as we would work in our weakness and ignorance, but according to His wisdom and love; for you yourself I have no fears—you are going to your duty, and will, I doubt not, be enabled to fulfil it. Go then,

dearest—do what you *can*, and leave it to God to do as he *will*."

Mrs Malcolm had too much sense not to know that when an exertion is to be made, we can do it more effectually when left to ourselves, than when another is at hand to whom we have been accustomed to cling for support and assistance; and that more minds are rendered helpless from the mistaken and injudicious tenderness of friends, than by being left to their own resources and exertions. She, therefore, wisely forbore to offer her assistance at this time.

Edith was now anxious and impatient to be gone, even while her heart recoiled at the thoughts of her return. The preparation having been quickly made, she took an agitated farewell of Inch Orran and its affectionate inmates, and ere the tumult of her spirit had subsided, she found herself once more within the dear domain of Glenroy. But, ah! how changed to her was now Glenroy! Yet as its fondly pictured scenes again met her eye, the visions of her early days also rose to view. For a brief moment, her heart cast off the burden of its woes; and as memory

gave back, in all their brightness, the happy days she had spent amid those very scenes, the past only seemed reality.

But quickly the illusion vanished, and was succeeded by bitter recollections and humiliating thoughts. She had lately left that home the beloved, the betrothed of Reginald, and she now returned to it the slighted, forsaken daughter of Glenroy.

But even these feelings were suspended when the carriage drove up to the castle, and she beheld dismay and alarm painted on the countenances of the servants as they hurried to and fro.

"What has happened?" she called faintly to the housekeeper, who was stationed to receive her.

"Don't be frightened, ma'am; but Glenroy has had, about an hour ago, a—a—a stroke of the palsy, ma'am, and has lost"——

Edith waited to hear no more; with a wild exclamation, she rushed forward, regardless of the voice of the servant who sought to detain her, and in another minute was by the side of her father's couch.

CHAPTER XXIX.

There lay Glenroy speechless, his features slightly distorted, but the expression calm and apparently tranquil; and on one side sat Benbowie, with a face of dull, sorrowful amazement; and on the other was poor Mrs Macauley, tears flowing profusely over her face, while she stroked, with childish fondness, the powerless hand of her beloved Chief.

"Oh, my dear, this is no a sight for you!" cried she to Edith; "'deed it's as much as my old, hard heart can do to stand it. But it's God's will, and a punishment for my sins, and so I do not complain;" and a torrent of tears gushed forth.

Glenroy opened his eyes, and at sight of Edith, smiled complacently, then cast an enquiring look around, and vainly tried to articulate; but his meaning was sufficiently apparent.

"It's our own darling Miss Edith come back," said Mrs Macauley, hastily brushing away her tears, and speaking fondly to him; "and somebody else will come too, and then, please God, you'll be yourself again, Glenroy, and we'll all be as happy as ever." Then in a low voice to Edith, "Cheer up, my darling, and do not let your papa see your distress; but try to put some heart in him, though I'm but a silly creature myself." As the tears again burst forth,—"'Deed I think Benbowie has more sense and discretion than any of us, for he's just what he always was."

"Why—oh why was I not told of this sooner?" cried Edith, in an agony of self-reproach, as she bent over her father's almost lifeless form.

"Oh, my dear, we could not tell you, for we did not know what was to happen ourselves! Oh, what creatures we are! We know not what a day may bring forth. I little thought yesterday, when I wrote my letter to you, of what was coming; and when I sent it away this morning, I thought him better, and more like himself

than he had been for a long time, though, to be sure, I had a very extraordinary dream."

"Then when did it happen? Have you sent for medical assistance?" cried Edith, distractedly.

"Oh, compose yourself, my dear!" cried the poor weeping Macky. "Yes—yes, the doctor has been sent for, and so has—But I'm so confused, I hardly know what I'm about. Did you ask when it happened—When was it, Benbowie?"

"It was just five-and-twenty minutes past two—just," replied Benbowie.

"Ay—and he was just sitting there in his chair, and I was chatting to him, and trying to please him; but I suppose I had said something that had not pleased him; for he said in his own way, says he, 'Molly Macauley, you are a stupid, old, ignorant'—and then he stopped; so I waited a little to hear what more was coming, but no more said he. So says I, 'Well, what else, Glenroy, for you may call me what you please—I know very well what you mean by it—so it's all tint that falls by,' but not a word.

Well, I was winding a clue, and so I just went on, and I forgot myself so far as to be singing, and you know, Glenroy never could bear my singing—and so when I remembered that, I stopped and begged his pardon—but then when he did not begin to scold me, I began to feel very queer somehow—and so I looked at him—as sure as death, there he was just as you see him now—and oh, not a word, good or bad, has he ever spoken since!" then a fresh flood of tears concluded poor Molly's narrative.

"My dear—dear papa! what can I do for you?" cried Edith, throwing herself on her knees by the couch, and laying her face close to his, as though she strove to read his wishes there. Glenroy uttered some inarticulate sounds, and again rolled his eyes as if in search of some one.

Edith felt the appeal with agony.

"Well, that's something," cried Mrs Macauley, joyfully; "and I know who he's looking for—ay, that I do; and if he had but his will, I really think he would come all right. 'Deed, I would not wonder if all this has hap-

pened, just because he has not got his own way —good man that he is; but I wager that he'll get it yet, and that I'll give him an agreeable surprise before it's long. So be as composed as you can, my darling; and now that you've seen your papa, if you would please to go and rest yourself, and take something, for oh, my dear lamb, you look very white and ill."

The doctor came, and did what he could, but to little purpose. Glenroy remained much the same, and it was only at sight of Edith, or at the sound of her voice, that any difference was perceptible; but then he always revived, and made an effort to express, by words or signs, a meaning which she but too well guessed.

"Well, I really think an agreeable surprise will have a great effect on Glenroy," said Mrs Macauley; "I'm sure it always does me good; but I doubt we cannot have it till to-morrow forenoon at the soonest, for that slow creature Benbowie has only sent away his letter half an hour ago."

The letter, which was intended to produce this agreeable surprise, was from Benbowie to

Sir Reginald, and even with its omissions and blunders, was the most correct and intelligible Benbowie had ever penned.

"Dear Sir,

"I have the misfortune to acquaint you, that Glenroy has this morning had a stroke of the palsy, which deprived him of, and took place at twenty-five minutes past two P.M., when sitting in his own room. I think it my duty to acquaint you with this stroke, that you may do what you think proper; no one here being authorized to act under this stroke for you. With much grief, I am, dear sir, faithfully yours,

"Lach. Malcolm."

It found Sir Reginald at Dunshiera, where he still remained, a prey to conflicting passions;—at one moment ready to fly to Florinda, to claim her as his own, and, in so doing, ensure their mutual happiness, beyond the power of fortune; at the next, yielding to pity for Edith and Glenroy;—then fired by pride, as he thought how the world would say he had broken his vows, and

deserted the poor portionless Edith for her wealthy, titled rival. Such was the state of his mind, when the intelligence (as he naturally concluded) of his uncle's death reached him, and for the moment overwhelmed him with feelings of the deepest sorrow and remorse. Having learned, however, from the servant, that Glenroy still lived, he lost no time in setting off, late as was the hour when the express reached him, and having travelled during the night, he arrived by sunrise the following morning. Anxious to avoid disturbing the family at so early an hour, he gained admittance as quietly as possible, and finding only one of the inferior servants yet stirring, from whom he could obtain little information, he went directly and softly to the sick chamber.

Edith had taken some hours' rest, but had risen with the light of day to resume her station by her father's side, and to relieve the faithful Mrs Macauley, who had watched there the livelong night, and who now with difficulty consented to retire to an adjoining apartment to take a little repose. She had dismissed the servants, also, who

had been in attendance, and remained alone by the sick bed. A chink of an open shutter showed a scene without, in striking contrast with that which was passing within the closed curtains. There, all nature was awaking into new existence beneath the glories of the rising sun,—here, life seemed passing away amid clouds and darkness. The natural train of mournful, but salutary reflections arose in her mind, as she gazed on the powerless form and pallid features of the proud lord of all the goodly scene which smiled in vain around him. The spirit which still lingered in the body—what was, what might be passing there? Was it still grovelling amid scenes of low-born cares,—was it even now "steeped in forgetfulness,"—or was it already hovering on the confines of immortality, preparing to render up its account of the deeds done in the body? Oh, questions of deep and awful import! At these thoughts she sank on her knees, and poured forth her supplications in all the fervour of a feeling and a sorrowful heart. In the intensity of her devotion, she heard not the low taps twice repeated of some one asking

admittance at the door, nor was aware that it had been slowly and softly opened, and that some one was present, but shaded from view by the folds of the curtains, till as she rose from her knees, she perceived that Reginald stood before her. At any other time, Edith would have been overpowered by so sudden and unexpected a meeting; but now her mind had been strengthened and calmed by the pious exercises in which she had been engaged, and the solemn circumstances under which they met by the death-bed, as she believed, of her father, banished all lesser and more selfish considerations. Her cheek, 'tis true, was very pale, and a slight tremor shook her whole frame; yet she betrayed little emotion, and merely bent her head in return to Sir Reginald's salutation, while he, in extreme agitation, addressed a few almost inarticulate words of apology for the intrusion he had been guilty of. But at the first sound of his voice, Glenroy opened his eyes with an expression of pleasure, and the working of his features, and the heaving of his breast for a few moments, denoted the efforts he was making to

express the satisfaction he felt. At length, with one mighty gasp, he emphatically articulated, "Reginald!" "Thank heaven!" Edith would have said, but her utterance failed her. A thousand emotions mingled in her heart at hearing this once-cherished name, so long banished from her lips, from her ear, now suddenly operating as a spell to arouse her father from death to life; she shuddered,—she became dizzy with conflicting feelings; after vainly struggling to master them, she fell senseless on the floor. Reginald called loudly for assistance, in his alarm for Edith entirely overlooking Glenroy, who continued gasping and struggling for farther utterance. In an instant Mrs Macauley was in the room, and, all aghast at the spectacle that presented itself, she for the first time in her life stood transfixed in silent amazement—Edith, the image of death, supported in the arms of Reginald, and Glenroy writhing in all the agonies of impotent irritability.

"Do come here," called Sir Reginald, beckoning to her to assist in bearing Edith to a sofa.

"M—M—Molly," stuttered Glenroy.

"Oh!" exclaimed she, in rapture, "what a joyful sound!" She stood for a moment suspended between the two. "I declare I do not know which hand of me to turn to, I'm so happy, and so sorry, and so—But oh, what a blessing to think Glenroy has got his tongue again!—Oh, what's this has come over her? 'Deed, it has been just this agreeable surprise. But see, she's coming to;—Sir Reginald, hold up her head on your arm—and—there's no fear but what all will come right yet;" and off trotted the well-meaning but mistaken Mrs Macauley to the other end of the chamber, to the side of her beloved Chief.

When Edith opened her eyes she found herself supported by Sir Reginald, and the sight of the pity and distress depicted on his countenance instantly recalled her to a sense of her situation. The blush of wounded pride quickly mantled her cheeks as she withdrew herself from his support.

"You feel better now, do you not?" enquired Reginald anxiously. Edith's heart thrilled, as the tenderness of the accent recalled the remembrance of former days. For a few minutes she

remained silent, gradually regaining her self-possession, till at length she was able to say, "The sound of papa's voice had a strange effect upon me, and I fear my weakness must have agitated him. Pray leave me; I am now well." But Reginald still wavered.

"Oh, Sir Reginald, will you come here?" called Mrs Macauley, while Glenroy vainly strove to repel her officious cares, and to recall his nephew. Glenroy's energies had been dormant, but not extinguished, and the sight of Reginald had awakened them from the lethargy into which they had sunk. "Oh! did not I tell you," cried she, all vibrating with joy, "what an effect an agreeable surprise would have upon poor Glenroy? 'Deed, I think it was very clever in me to have found that out!"

CHAPTER XXX.

There was a new trial for Edith, and one she had little anticipated. Glenroy, helpless, fatuous, and almost speechless, was more despotic than ever, and was never satisfied unless when Reginald and she were before him. Enough could be gathered from his broken and imperfect expressions to know, that the theme uppermost in his mind was their marriage, and thus the situation of both parties was one of the most painful embarrassment. But for either of them to leave him was impossible, in the critical state he was then in, when the slightest opposition to his wishes would, in all probability, have been attended with the most fatal consequences. Although, in obedience to her father's commands, she gave him much of her company when Reginald was present, she carefully avoided all occa-

sions of being alone with the latter; and when they met at meals, she strove as much as possible to maintain the unvarying calm politeness of manner, which was merely due towards her father's guest. But dearly was the struggle maintained, and many was the bitter tear shed in secret, when the chords of high-strained exertion were for a moment relaxed.

So passed several days, during which Glenroy made such progress towards recovery, that he was now able to sit up, and even to converse, or rather talk, pretty much in his usual strain, only his mind was still weaker, his ideas more confused, and his temper more irritable than ever. His idolatry for his heir, and his fondness for Edith, had also increased, so that he could not endure either of them to be out of his sight; fortunately he dozed and slept much during the day, when they of course were released from their thraldom, otherwise it would scarcely have been possible for them to have endured the torture of being associated together in Glenroy's company. It were endless to detail the absurdities and inconsistencies of a mind in its

dotage. Sir Reginald at first bore them with compassionate forbearance and kindness of manner; but his patience became exhausted, and he now frequently testified his weariness and irritation in a manner which wounded Edith to the quick.

One day, when Sir Reginald and she were sitting by him, listening to, or at least hearing, old stories of the cutting of the woods, the black pony, &c. &c., a servant entered, to say that Mr M'Dow and Mrs M'Dow were in the drawing-room. Edith turned pale, Sir Reginald uttered an exclamation of disgust, and Glenroy, catching the name, repeated "M'Dow—M'Dow. Ay, that's he, that's he—the—the what do you call it?—the that—Edith, you know very well what I mean—the man that marries you—the, the minister! And what for should he not come, and marry you and Reginald just now?—Tell Mr M'Dow," he called to the servant, "to come here and bring the—the—the——" But Edith heard no more, for she hastily rose and quitted the room. But feeling there would be no safety under the same roof with Mr M'Dow, she hur-

ried out by a private door, which passed from her father's anteroom upon the terrace.

Instinctively she sought refuge in a part of the grounds, which, if not the most remote, was at least the most inaccessible, in the vicinity of the Castle. It was a little, wild, rocky dell, which, from having been left pretty much in its natural state, had ever been the favourite resort of the children of the family. There was a little brook in which they might wade or angle, or sail their tiny boats, without risk of drowning; and there were hazels for nutting, and mountain-ash for bows and arrows; and there were brambles and sloes, and juniper-berries in abundance, and stones for tables; and, in short, every thing to delight the heart of happy unsophisticated childhood. Here many a joyous day Edith had passed with her young companions, Reginald, and Norman, and Ronald. In compliment to her predilection for this spot, Reginald, before he went abroad, had caused a rustic temple to be erected there, lined with various-coloured moss, and their initials entwined with such quaint devices, and in as skilful a manner, as

the nature of the materials permitted. Here, too, the evening before they parted, he had taken Edith to view this trophy of his love, and then they had each planted at the entrance a honeysuckle, and a wild rose. Duly were these tended, and fondly were they watched by her, during his long absence, and they had grown and flourished to their utmost luxuriance; but the sweetness of both was past for the season, and they now only hung their long slender branches in mournful penury, while their seared and yellow leaves lay scattered around, and the gay summer brook, now swelled by autumnal rains into a turbid stream, murmured and gurgled hoarsely along. With sad and faltering steps Edith approached the spot fraught with so many overwhelming recollections—each bush, each stone, told its voiceless tale of perished life—of beauty turned to dust—of love and hope changed to gall and wormwood. The very silence that surrounded her spoke more eloquently than words could have done, of the desolation of all things. She entered the mossy bower, so long her favourite retreat, and

gave way to the melancholy that oppressed her. Amid these scenes, it was almost a luxury to weep—it seemed as though these mute witnesses of her early pleasures were now become the sympathetic depositaries of her maturer sorrows. Heedless of time, she remained sunk in mournful abstraction, till roused by a dog rushing in and bounding upon her, with all the ardour of attachment. It was a favourite pointer of Reginald's, which she had petted almost to spoiling in his absence, and the faithful creature never failed, when at liberty, to fly to her, and lavish his caresses on the gentle hand that had so often fed and fondled him. Soon after, Reginald's voice was heard calling loudly to the dog, and presently he entered with his gun in his hand, in pursuit, as it appeared, of the runaway. At sight of Edith he stopped, and colouring, said, "I did not expect—I was not aware—I—" then, as if to cover his confusion, he broke into expressions of anger against his dog, and advanced, as if to strike him; but the animal crouched close to Edith.

"Pray do not hurt poor Bran," she said,

stooping over him to hide the tears which still hung round her eyes.

"He is become a mere useless, good for nothing cur," said Reginald, giving him a shove with his foot, and evidently bent upon keeping up his ill-humour; "'tis provoking to see a good dog so completely ruined—I shall certainly have him shot."

Edith's heart swelled at the harsh unfeeling manner in which Reginald spoke; but she tried to be calm, while she said, "I fear 'tis I who am in fault more than poor Bran—my fondness for him"—she stopped.

"Has been his ruin," said Reginald.

There was something in the tone and manner in which this was uttered, that struck Edith to the heart. She could not speak; but struggling with her feelings, she rose to leave the place, when, as if smitten with a sense of his unkindness, Reginald caught her hand.

"Forgive me," he said, "I did not mean to pain you—but there are times when I know not what I say—what I mean."

Edith could not speak, but she motioned to be

gone. Reginald's agitation seemed little less than her own; but he still held her hand, and several times attempted to speak, but emotion choked his utterance. At last he said, "Edith, this state of things is not to be endured—I would fain speak to you—tell you of what I have suffered since—No, Edith, you must hear me—dishonoured as I am in your eyes—cold and estranged as you are become—'tis but justice you should hear me."

"I have nothing to hear," said Edith, faintly.

"Yes—you have to hear me exculpate myself from the very suspicion of cold-blooded perfidy. My crime—if crime it was—was an involuntary one—so was the avowal of it. I would have died a thousand deaths rather than have wronged you, Edith. Would to heaven," he exclaimed, wildly, "would I had died, rather than have lived to suffer as I do!"

"Why recur to what has passed—to what cannot be recalled?" said Edith, with emotion.

"Because I would yet recall much of what has passed. Edith, I would yet ask you to forgive—to forget"—(He stopped, and paused in

extreme agitation, then proceeded)—" to suffer me to expiate, by a life devoted to you, the—involuntary error into which I have fallen."

The pride of woman—the pride of Glenroy, for a moment mantled Edith's pale cheek with a deep glow at this proposal, and she remained silent; but it was plain her silence was not that of doubt or timidity, but of deeply-wounded feeling. Reginald's colour also rose. "If there is more that you would have me do, and that I *can* do, speak, and it shall be done."

" You might have spared me this, had you known me better," said Edith; " such professions must be painful to you—to me they are degrading."

" Degrading!—if to forgive is degrading—"

" I do forgive, with my whole heart," said Edith, with emotion.

" And the proof?" demanded Reginald, bitterly.

" That I wish you all happiness," said Edith, in a faltering accent; and, unable to restrain her tears, she was again moving away.

" Stay, Edith," cried Reginald; " we must

not—we shall not part thus. 'Tis a mockery to talk of happiness to one so wretched as I. My happiness must ever be involved in yours—my suffering is, perhaps, still greater than yours. Edith, if you will yet confide in me, I again repeat—Heaven be my witness!—your happiness shall be the study of my future life. Say, then, that"——

"Hear me, Reginald, once for all," said Edith, in the calmness of deep-felt emotion. "That my happiness was once in your hands, I freely acknowledge; but that time is past, *never* to return. There are feelings which never can be renewed. We never can be to each other what we have been. I never can—I never *will* be yours."

A strange mingled sensation shot through Reginald's veins at this declaration, delivered with a calm, solemn earnestness of manner, which admitted of no appeal. With an air of pride, he bent his head, and said,—"Since such is your irrevocable determination, it is better we should part; for I will no longer play the hypocrite.

I cannot continue to act the part of the favoured lover, after being thrice rejected."

"And my father!" exclaimed Edith, in anguish.—"Ah! Reginald, what will become of him, if you forsake him?"

"I appeal to yourself, Edith, to your own good sense, to your right feeling, if, after what has passed, it is to be expected that I should continue to drag out existence here? By Heaven, I would rather work as a galley-slave!"

"But you are all, and every thing to him," said Edith, mournfully.

"So at least I might have been—so I might be still; but you have decreed otherwise," said Reginald, with a sort of haughty humility. Edith felt the cruel taunt, but she made no reply, only turned away to hide the tears which rose to her eyes. Reginald's tone softened, and he sighed as he said,—"Edith, 'tis best for both that we should part—at least for the present. Hearts once so dear—still so dear to each other—Edith, we are still too much, and yet not enough to each other—if the time should ever come——" He stopped, for he would fain have added, "when

we may be more ;" but his lips refused to utter so false a supposition—" should the time ever come, Edith," he added, with confusion, " when your present sentiments may change—" Edith could not speak, but she waved her head to repel such a supposition—" At least, you cannot prevent me from thinking it *possible* they may," said Reginald.

Edith's pale cheek glowed, while she said,— " No, Reginald—rest assured *my* sentiments are unchangeable."

" And mine also," thought Reginald, as his heart throbbed at the bare idea that his love for Florinda could ever change—could ever be given to another, even though that other were Edith. He stood silent for a few minutes, then said, hurriedly,—" Then let us part; I am now on my way to Dunshiela. But, should Glenroy become worse, you have only to send for me, and I shall return to you instantly. God bless you, Edith!"

A tear was in his eye as he held her hand in his, and looked anxiously, fondly, upon her, as though he waited her parting word. Edith's

breast heaved—her lips moved—but no sound passed them. She felt her fortitude giving way, but she made a strong effort, and said, with the calmness of agony,—"May you be happy!"

He wrung her hand in silence; and thus they parted—under what different circumstances again to meet!

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

EDINBURGH:
PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE AND COMPANY
PAUL'S WORK, CANONGATE.